BUMPER CHRISTMAS ISSUE

No. 1043
14 December –
27 Dec. 2001
£1.50

PRIVATE EYE

OSANTA'S GROTTO

BOMB

HO HO HOLY WAR!

W. & J.

GRAHAM'S

ESTABLISHED 1820

SIX CHEERS FOR GRAHAM'S

Our wine-maker seems to be doing rather well. To have received **the top award for Port** from the judges at **The Wine Challenge**, the UK's major wine competition, may sound like just cause for celebration. But to have won it **six times**, when no one else has ever won it more than **once**, is yet more pleasing. There is also a satisfying *symmetry* in the coincidental fact that **six members of our family** are now making Port in a family firm that goes back over four generations. Writing of **Graham's** in the Wine Spectator, *James Suckling* has observed, "The consistently outstanding quality of its Vintage Ports illustrates a passion for making great Port." And the respected authority *Robert Parker* remarked "**Graham's** has probably been the most consistent producer of great Port in the post World War II era." **Graham's** has repeatedly won more top awards than any of its competitors. Since 1993, **Graham's** has won a record total of **16 coveted Gold Medals** for its Ports in **The Wine Challenge**, including, this year, a gold for the 1995 Quinta dos Malvedos. In the circumstances, we think three cheers seems rather modest. Let's have six.

The Quintessential Port.

www.grahams-port.com

GNOMEBY'S

A Statement From The Chairman

THE disgraceful decision by the American courts to send me to prison must represent the blackest day for the United States in their entire history.

It results from a fundamental lack of understanding of British business ethics as they have been practised here since my ancestors first auctioned their cave paintings in the dawn of civilisation. (Reserve price: one mammoth.)

It is simple enough. If two firms are competing for the same business, the chairmen of the two companies have an agreeable lunch and decide to charge their clients the same fee – a very reasonable 98% of the buying and selling price.

This eliminates unhealthy competition which could well result in an unnecessary lack of large profits for one or other of the companies.

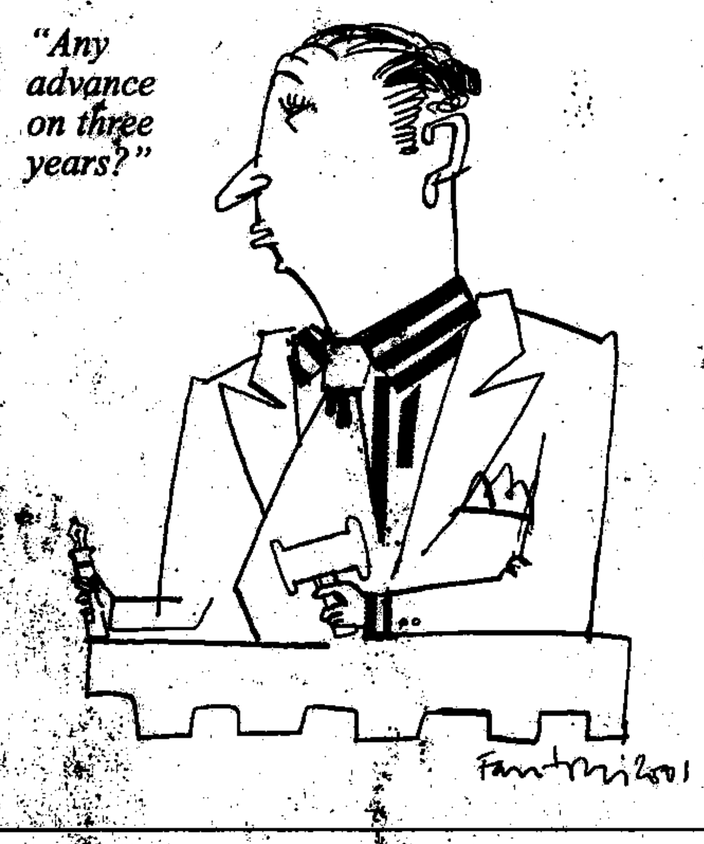
Why cannot the Americans understand this basic economic reality and release me?

E. Strobes, pp. Lord Gnome
"Free The Gnomebys One"

● Send valuable old masters, rare musical instruments and highly important forgeries to the Gnomeby Fighting Fund, Bond Street, at once.

GNOMEBY'S

NEW YORK – LONDON – ALCATRAZ



Cover by Nick Newman and Tony Trimmer

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

£19 per annum. Europe and Eire £27. Airmail (rest of world) £35. Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Access/Visa.

PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS
Mortimer House, 230-236 Lavender Hill, London SW11 1LE.
Tel: 020-7228 0588. Fax: 020-7924 3719.
Email: subscriptions@private-eye.co.uk

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. Tel: 020-7437 4017.
Fax: 020-7437 0705. Email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk.
http://www.private-eye.co.uk

ADVERTISING
Tel: 020-7923 5402

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by Goodhead Print Group plc, Bicester OX6 7QZ . **Distributed** by P.E. Distribution, Mortimer House, 230/236 Lavender Hill, London SW11 1 LE. 020 7223 9971.

ABC

All over by Xmas!

- *A Fleet St farewell to make you gently weep* **5**
- *Meet Gordon Brown's nemesis in HP Sauce* **8**
- *Iraq and the scandal of the alms trade* **7**
- *The Enron is nigh; and a wake for Dr Wakefield: In the Back* **24, 25**
- *Eye special on Books of the Year* **26, 27**
- *Harrods sale? Slicker on Fayed* **28**

BELIEVING the prime minister to be in need of spiritual enlightenment, Bernard Roberts recently wrote to Tony Blair quoting ten lines from Blake's *Jerusalem*, one of the most famous poems in the English language.

Not famous enough, however, to have come to the attention of the staff of the direct communications unit at Number Ten, who promptly sent a reply which was addressed to Mr Roberts, but read: "Dear Mr Blake, The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your recent poem..."

THE demise of "old" Labour fixer Sir Ray Powell means Labour faces an early new year by-election in the rock solid, determinedly "old" Labour South Wales seat of Ogmore.

Powell famously led a rearguard action against Sunday trading – for many years he was sponsored by shop workers' union USDAW. And as a Labour whip he vigorously campaigned to prevent Ken Livingstone from getting any office space when he was elected to parliament in 1987.

Such was Powell's visceral hatred of the trendy London left that his persecution of Leninspart meant the newt-loving former GLC leader was reduced to working from a corridor even when every other new boy had been allocated an office. So who will succeed Powell?

Early front-runners would include Powell's chosen successor, Russell Goodway, whose controversial pay hike as leader of Cardiff council has earned him few friends in the impoverished valleys. Then there is Powell's sworn enemy, Jeff Jones, leader of Bridgend council. So bitter are the warring Welsh factions that Millbank must be confident of sneaking a squeaky-clean Blairista straight through the middle.

FEW tears will be shed by seasoned Labour party troublemakers as the rebel MP Paul Marsden leaves them and jumps ship to the Liberal Democrats.

It's not that they didn't believe his bleating about being bullied by the thugs in the Labour whips' office. They did. (When veteran Labour dissident Brian Sedgemore was recently confronted by a London Labour whip after rebelling against the anti-terrorism bill he was asked for details of his nearest "kith and kin").

The reason Shrewsbury MP Marsden couldn't find a friend among the serial rebels was that a) they cannot sympathise with a colleague who acts entirely alone, instead of plotting with them; and b) Marsden's local Labour party had the hump with him anyway.

WHEN it became clear to the ministry of defence that the *Eye's* favourite computer company EDS was not going to be able to deliver its computerised pay system on time, the contract was simply rewritten to the advantage of EDS because the original deal had failed to transfer risk (see *Eye 1042*).

But the Inland Revenue, whose 10-year contract with EDS has predictably and repeatedly gone over time and budget, does now have the choice of whether or not to remain at the mercy of the IT cock-up merchants. The IR's contract with EDS runs out in 2004 as does its contract with Accenture which currently runs the disastrous National Insurance Recording System (NIRS2); and both are now up for competitive tender.

"PEOPLE notice if they receive a Christmas card. And if they do not," reads the blurb from new PR outfit, the Communications Company, set up by former "new" Labour Millbank staffers, David Evans and Jonathan Upton.

The duo, seemingly fallen on hard times with the departure of former general secretary and protector, Margaret McDonagh, have just written to all Labour MPs claiming to offer "a number of discrete, but mutually reinforcing strategies that can help you".

These "reinforcing strategies" include "providing you with a Christmas card that is completely personal to you. The design of your choice on the front – together with your message and signature on the inside". And it doesn't stop there. "We can offer a further service and pack (and even address) them for you.... But as some MPs have demonstrated, a Christmas card designed by local schoolchildren is more powerful still."

BILLIONS of pounds every year go to line the pockets of financial services companies at the expense of consumers who are ill-informed about their personal finances, warned a survey from the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) published last month.

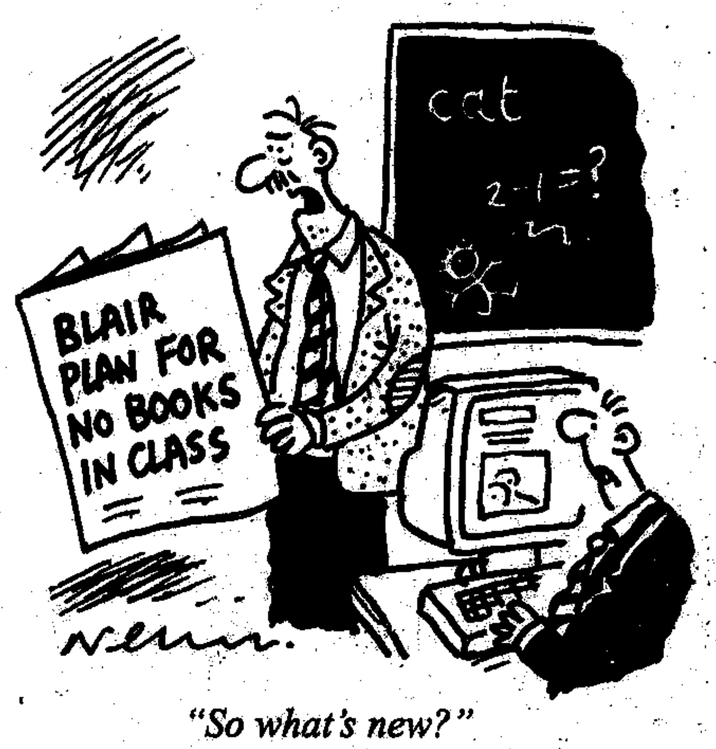
The report entitled *Summing Up* was launched at the head offices of the Prudential – the financial services company is giving NACAB £750,000 over the next three years to fund its new financial literacy programme beginning in 2002.

The amount being donated to NACAB by the Pru is only slightly more than the £650,000 the company was recently fined by the Financial Services Authority following failings in its pensions mis-selling review. Perhaps under this worthy scheme citizens advice bureaux will be enabled to give financial advice both to those people who have been mis-sold pensions and to the newly unemployed such as the 2,100 people made redundant at the start of November by, er, the Prudential.

EDUCASHUN, EDUCASHUN

"The figures for Stage II Literacy and Numeracy tests stood still, faltered or stuttered or whatever adjective you want to use."

— Estelle Morris, minister for education and skills, House of Commons, 4 December.



"So what's new?"

Street of Shame

AMID scenes of great rejoicing, *Express* proprietor Richard "Dirty" Desmond marked his 50th birthday last weekend with two parties at the Roundhouse in London.

There was a big bash on Saturday for Dirty Des's glamorous "personal friends" such as Richard Littlejohn and Jeremy Beadle, with entertainment provided by the Kinks – and Desmond himself playing the drums. (Asian babes and horny housewives were, however, conspicuous by their absence.) The rather less extravagant bunfight the previous evening was for staff from the Grey Lubyanka.

All staff leave was cancelled on the Friday to ensure that everyone would have to go and toast the chairman's health, whether they wanted to or not. Hacks were also warned that a list would be kept at the door, so that any absentees could be noted and bollocked. To raise morale still further, they were told that there would be no Christmas party this year since Dirty Des's birthday was a far better cause for celebration.

Meanwhile, Desmond's corrupt henchman Stan Myerson got his wife Renee (who is head of magazine advertising) to send her secretary round the *Express* building with a collection envelope to raise money for Dirty Des's birthday present. Some disgruntled galley-slaves wondered why they should make a donation to a multi-millionaire who has never shown them any generosity. But Myerson had anticipated this problem. The secretary had strict instructions not to let the hacks put money directly into the envelope themselves: she must take it from them and make a note so that Stan would know exactly who had given what – and, presumably, be able to punish the skinflints.

ON 25 October the esteemed science mag *Nature* published a review of *Genes, Girls and Gamow*, the new book by James Watson (of Crick-and-Watson fame). It was none too flattering.

Now, just over month later, the magazine has published a cryptic editorial on the importance of "maintaining a balance between the rights of authors and reviewers and between fact and interpretation" – followed by a formal statement disowning its review of the Watson book. It particularly stresses its "disagreement" with the reviewer's line about Watson "arrogating responsibility for the discovery of DNA" – which was essentially an accusation that he stole undue credit.

Why the sudden apology? The main reason, it seems, is that Watson refused to attend a forthcoming jamboree celebrating the 50th anniversary of the discovery of DNA, at which he (along with Crick) was to have been the star guest. The boycott would obviously be most embarrassing for the organiser of the event – which happens to be *Nature*. Whether the editorial grovelling will mollify the great man remains to be seen.

FULL marks to Carolyn McCall, managing director of Guardian Newspapers, for her commitment to openness. "I thought it would be helpful to clarify to all staff how GNL is handling the economic downturn," she writes in a circular to employees of the *Grauniad* and *Observer*. "Along with general cost reductions across the company, we have also introduced a non-automatic headcount replacement policy."

What this appears to mean, in plain English, is that departing staff won't automatically be replaced. But we could be wrong: perhaps McCall could "clarify" matters with another of her enlightening memos.

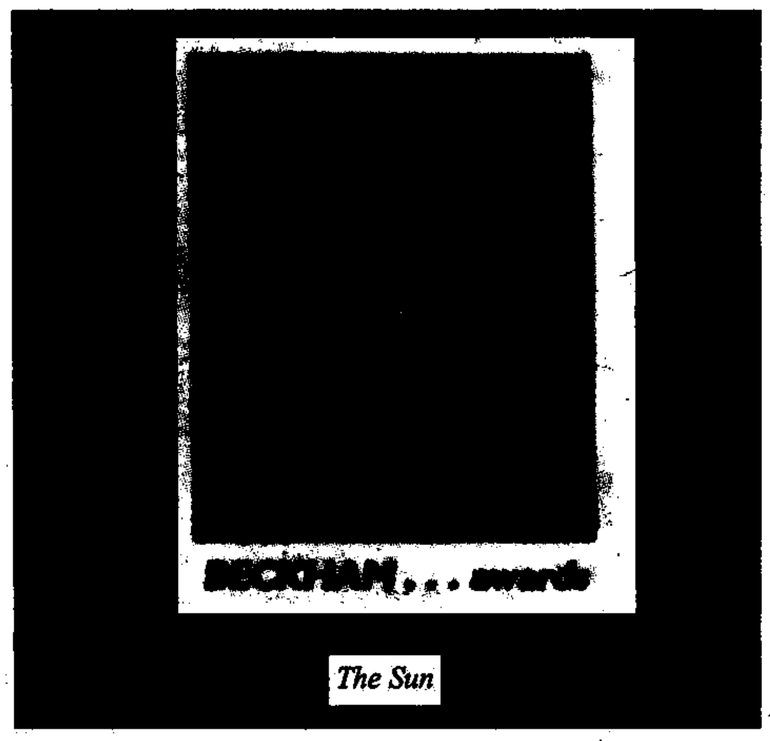
ETHICALLY aware *Guardian* readers who are tempted by the newspaper's current offer of world wide annual travel insurance from just £60 a year should note that the cover is arranged by Jardine Lloyd Thompson Travel Services.

Surely this firm bears no relation to the Jardine Lloyd Thompson blacklisted by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions for continuing to do business in Burma, despite the repressive military dictatorship in that country, and named and shamed on this account in, er, the *Grauniad*?

NEWSPAPERS will go to any length to hang on to advertisers in the current financial climate. The ad department at the *Independent on Sunday* is so desperate to keep the business of Taste for Wine – the new bulk buy service from Sainsbury's and Oddbins – it has sent a global email to staff begging them to purchase wine from the venture: "They are a key advertiser for us, and we need to maximise orders pre-Xmas."

In November the *Sindy* published a food and wine supplement in conjunction with Taste for Wine and the ad department wants to ensure the continuation of this fruitful relationship. "To help us make it more of a success and to ensure they do further business with us please take a look at what Taste for Wine have to offer this Christmas," pleads the email. "They're offering *Independent* readers a fantastic deal."

Unfortunately the *Indy* has few readers left to take advantage of this fantastic deal, while the underpaid hacks have little hope of scraping together enough pennies to pay for a whole crate of wine.



The Sun

ANDREW O'Hagan is on top form in the latest *London Review of Books*, writing about Jonathan Franzen's novel *The Corrections*.

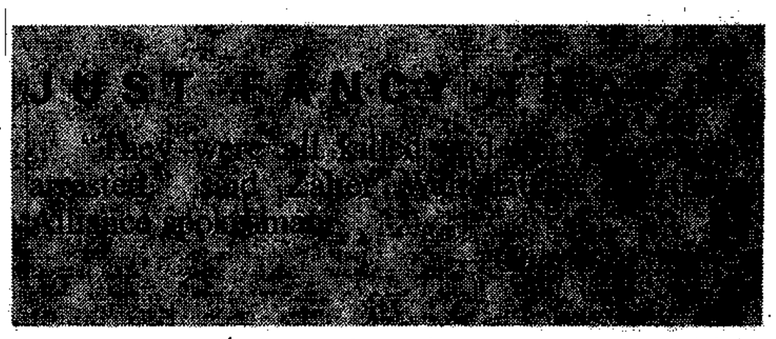
"Franzen is under the influence, yet he is mainly wise, and Postmodernly wise, in the manner of his integrations, and we might find in the mulch of his deepest reading a new consistency… Being yourself is a question at the very heart of the book – at the heart of the society the novel pulses into – and part of the novel's unconscious aesthetic drive is to summon all the writing that makes this writing what it is… What it fails to do is what it does, and in its failure lies its success."

In the contributors' notes to the same issue, editor Mary-Kay Wilmers announces that Andrew O'Hagan "has become an *LRB* contributing editor – which means he will be writing more pieces". Whether they can ever reach the same peaks of discursive elegance as his Franzen review remains to be seen.

AS IF running a newspaper in wartime weren't difficult enough, *Sunday Telegraph* editor Dominic Lawson has had to deal with a bloody conflict between his foreign editor Robin Gedye and hackette Jessica Berry – whose grandfather was former *Torygraph* proprietor Lord Hartwell, and whose father Adrian Berry still sits on the board of directors.

The casus belli was Berry's application to the Iraqis for a visa to go to Baghdad. Jealous colleagues accused her of thus jeopardising the safety of an undercover *Sunday Telegraph* hack who was trying to enter Iraq secretly. When Lawson investigated the complaint, Berry claimed that she was only obeying orders, since Gedye had told her to apply for the visa. Gedye, however, insisted that he had done no such thing.

Showing the wisdom of Solomon, Lawson has dispensed punishments all round. Berry, whose contract was due to expire soon anyway, has been banned from the office and told to work from home in future. Meanwhile the foreign editor has been told that he is no longer to supervise coverage of the war against terrorism: the responsibility for the biggest foreign story in years has now been handed to, er, the home news editor, Richard Ellis.



EYEBROWS were raised when Bill Hagerty's well-respected media column in the *New Statesman* was dumped in favour of one by William Hague's failed Australian spin-doctor Amanda "Killer Bimbo" Platell. A few weeks on, it is increasingly clear that Platell's column owes more to self-promotion than to perceptive analysis – culminating in her "Open Letter to Greg Dyke" in the 3 December issue.

Amanda is desperate for a career as a TV personality, despite the fact that several producers who have tried her out reckon she lacks any of the necessary attributes – as confirmed by her pisspoor "video diary" of Hague's election campaign. And, by happy coincidence, her open letter to Dyke suggested that BBC current affairs programmes would be far better if presented by sassy females with non-RP accents. Who could she have in mind?

(Almost the only show exempted from her criticism of the Beeb's political output was Radio 5's *Sunday Service*. True, its presenter Charlie Whelan may be one of those middle-aged white males she so despises – but he also happens to be a close friend and a fellow *NS* columnist.)

Some disgruntled *NS* hacks are now suggesting that Amanda's future columns should be run in the "Sits Wanted" section of the classified pages. At least that way she'd have to pay for her shameless adverts.

THE TAKI SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

Palm Beach – As everyone knows, Palm Beach is a pristine, immaculate resort north of Miami, a manicured place full of palm trees, great mansions by the sea and some awfully rich people, and a town where law and order reign supreme. There are as many socialists in Palm Beach as there are socialites in Kandahar. It is the most famous resort in America, and deservedly so. It reeks of money and comfort, a toy town for the well-off, a village where one can buy a Rolls or Mercedes or a very large diamond in a jiffy but cannot have one's shirt laundered.

— Taki, High Life, *The Spectator*, 1/12/01.

Palm Beach is a pristine, immaculate resort north of Miami, a place full of palm trees, great mansions by the sea, and multi-millionaires, where law and order reign supreme, and where socialists are as rare as socialites in Qum.

It is the most famous watering-hole in America, and deservedly so. It reeks of money and comfort, a toy town for the very rich, a village where one can buy a Mercedes or a diamond but cannot have one's shirt laundered.

— Taki, High Life, *The Spectator*, 5/12/87.

CONRAD BLACK is, without doubt, a vain man: so vain that he recently abandoned his Canadian citizenship merely so he could be allowed to call himself Lord Black of Crossharbour. But vanity has its price – and *Telegraph* hacks are paying it. He announced this week that 10 percent of them are to be made redundant by Christmas. There will also be a 15 percent cut in budgets and a pay freeze.

Staff at the Telegraph Group – the only part of his shrinking empire that makes money, apart from a few obscure local rags in North America – were understandably horrified by news of their impending decimation. Milord Black's vainglorious obsessions seem increasingly to take precedence over commercial logic.

The first sign of this was his founding of the *National Post* in Toronto in 1998. It was essentially a vanity publication: Black was so infuriated by the liberal tendencies of the Canadian press that he decided to create a right-wing daily to counter them. It made no business sense at all in a country where conservatism is even more unpopular than in Britain – and, sure enough, the paper has haemorrhaged money ever since its launch. By the time he finally sold the *Post* in August he had lost £75m on the venture.

Most of this loss was covered by his loot from the *Telegraph* group in London, which made record profits last year. Since 11 September, however, the group's earnings have plummeted (as have most other newspapers'). Last month a rumour circulated that the *Telegraphs* might be for sale, but this was instantly denied by Black's henchman Dan Colson, chief executive of the group. "We effectively have $1 billion in cash and no debt," he boasted two weeks ago. "I've been in this business with Conrad for 31 years and one thing I can say after living through two recessions is that invariably it creates opportunities."

No doubt this will provide great consolation to the dozens of *Telegraph* hacks who are made redundant in the next week or two. But they may wonder why such savage cuts are necessary if Conrad does indeed have a billion dollars in the bank.

They may also be puzzled to learn that while Black throttles the goose that lays his golden eggs, he is still happy to throw money at vanity-publishing ventures elsewhere. He has just spent $2m acquiring a 12.5 percent stake in the *New York Sun*, a neo-conservative, pro-Israeli newspaper that is due to be launched next year to challenge the "liberal bias" of the *New York Times* and *New York Post*. This is, if anything, an even more eccentric enterprise than the *National Post*: the *Sun* will be a broadsheet of just six or eight pages, with an initial print-run of under 10,000 copies. It is unlikely that the publishers of Manhattan's long-established dailies are quaking in their boots – and it's a dead cert that Conrad will lose money.

Still, the dream of making a big noise in New York often proves irresistible to Fleet Street egomaniacs. The last London press baron whose deranged ambition lured him across the Atlantic – buying the *New York Daily News*, with disastrous consequences – was, er, Robert Maxwell.

SPIGGY TOPES

A Nation Mourns

HE WAS, as everyone reminded us, "the quiet Beatle"; but his send-off was deafening. The *Mail* devoted its first 13 pages to George Harrison's death, as did the *Mirror*. The *Express*, rather disrespectfully, gave him only seven news pages – but added a "free memorial pull-out" to make up for it. Even the *Daily Telegraph* cleared pages 1-5 for ululating tributes, including a piece by Bob Geldof claiming that Harrison's passing would "make the whole planet feel sad".

When a *Telegraph* reader from Somerset (of course) dared to wonder if the coverage might have been slightly excessive ("how many pages did the *Daily Telegraph* devote to Elgar on his death?"), he was promptly savaged by a reader from (of course) Liverpool: "So Richard Kellaway considers five pages devoted to George Harrison as excessive in comparison to Elgar. I did not realise that death was a competition. This is so typical of the academic snobbery in this country, or should I say the pomp and circumstance?... If five pages have been written as a tribute then 'let it be'."

Let it be – geddit!?! The *Sun* used the same phrase as a front-page headline, even though it was actually a Paul McCartney song. Meanwhile, other headline-writers hastily looked up the titles of George's own hits. "My sweet George" (the *Sun*). "All things must pass" (*Independent*). "The world gently weeps for a legend" (*Daily Express*). "And the world gently weeps..." (*Daily Mirror*). "World gently weeps..." (The *Sun*). "Guitars gently weep" (*Evening Standard*).

What a lot of weeping there was. "Every day, George Harrison's face is one of the first I see," showbiz hack Dominic Mohan disclosed, in a tear-stained "personal tribute" in the *Sun*. "He peers at me from a framed Beatles picture above my bed. Yesterday, when my office rang at 7.55am, I woke up, knew something was wrong, glanced at George's grinning face and sensed I was about to be told that one quarter of the greatest band of all time was no longer with us. I'm not trying to be melodramatic and I'm not afraid to say it – I cried when I heard. The Beatles are in my blood – 'Get Back' was No1 the day I was born." He added that Harrison's demise "proves cancer is no respecter of wealth or talent" – a startling medical insight.

Harrison's friends were quick to pay well-judged tributes. Drummer Jim Capaldi suggested that Jesus Christ was the only other person who could have written the first line of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps". Writer Carla Lane told ITV's *This Morning* that "George was a bit like myself – deeply profound." Comedian Kenny Lynch commented: "It is not fair... Why should someone like George die when Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden are still on this earth?"

Osama Bin who? Politicians forgot the war as they struggled to cope with the overwhelming, earth-shattering news that the greatest icon since Jesus had died. Tony Blair interrupted a meeting with Bertie Ahern to hold an emergency press conference, and then gave an interview to the *Independent on Sunday* in which he boasted that although he never met Harrison he did know some of the chords to "Here Comes the Sun": "I played a bit of that on the guitar..."

Not to be outdone, Iain Duncan Smith claimed that the Beatles "symbolised the hopes and aspirations of people of my generation. They motivated my generation". (So *that's* why he decided to become a Tory MP.) The Labour backbencher Jane Griffiths, speaking in a debate on the home energy conservation bill, informed fellow MPs that "as a member of the post-war generation it has been difficult to speak in the House today – the day that witnessed the passing of George Harrison. Some of us are inclined to weep now that George's guitar gently weeps no more."

Even Boris Johnson felt obliged to issue a statement ("He will be mourned by the people of Henley...") A day later he launched a campaign to get Harrison a posthumous knighthood: "How can you not give one to the man who wrote 'Here Comes the Sun'?" Boris's crusade was taken up by the *Sunday Express* ("We Must Make Him Sir George"), which argued that although a rule-change would be needed to make the award possible, "the government and royal family should move in tune with the astonishing upsurge of public mourning not seen since the death of Princess Diana." (Clearly the similar "upsurge" when Jill Dando died is already long forgotten.)

As ever, it was the highbrow papers which provided the necessary intellectual context. "This is embarrassing but what the hell," Melvyn Bragg wrote in the *Observer*. "I heard that George had died when Penny Gore told me on Radio 3 and then she played 'My Sweet Lord'. I was in the kitchen, on my own, finishing breakfast and I felt a surge of real sadness and as that ironically pinched or borrowed song he made so much his own swelled from 'Hallelujah' to 'Hare Krishna', I stood up as I have done so often since the Sixties and danced along to a Beatle, the Beatles, George, a late middle-aged dressing-gowned solitary tribute in my own clumsy way expressing the word that the multicultural world so well mined by Harrison has reinvigorated and brought back to us: respect."

But it was the *Observer*'s Will Hutton who offered the most profound analysis. "I had thought to write a column this week first about the American Right, and then latterly about the Wanless report on the health service. But early yesterday morning... I scrapped both ideas." And for why? "The death of George Harrison is a chance to pause and take stock. Have we as a generation kept the promises we made to ourselves and each other when we sang those lyrics and were entranced by those albums?" Thatcherism, he argued, never understood the "collectivised individualism" that the Beatles embodied. "It is a complexity that New Labour better represents and understands."

At any great moment in history, Will Hutton can always be relied upon to find the *mots justes*. After 11 September, he wrote an *Observer* editorial claiming that the attack on the Twin Towers had "taken terrorism on to a new plane". How could he top that? Easy: he revealed that Harrison's death (from throat cancer, lest we forget) had left "a lump in my throat".

INTERNET LATEST

AGEING prog-rocker Peter Gabriel has reinvented himself as an internet mogul forging a partnership between his digital distribution service OD2 and the Italian firm Tiscali to launch a pan-European paid-for online music service which will no doubt benefit from the demise earlier this year of free music swapping service, Napster.

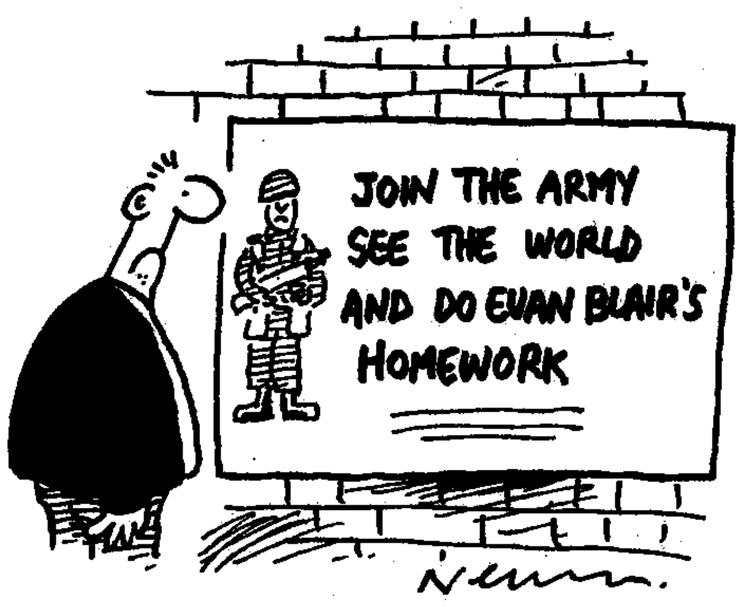
Gabriel was a key member of the music industry's anti-Napster group, Artists Against Piracy, and following the US federal appeals court ruling against Napster in February he commented: "Musicians love the idea of all music being available to all people, but without fair payment, many musicians would have to find other ways to make a living."

Happily Gabriel himself will not face this fate.

DAVID Blunkett's call for immigrants to assimilate with British culture will fall on deaf ears at internet shop Islamicoutlet.co.uk where discerning Muslims can get their holiday snaps developed "the Halal way".

The web site warns: "Many Muslims fail to realise that when they take their photos to be developed in places such as 'boots' their photos are often developed and looked at by men and thus leading Muslims into sin, by showing their awrah to non-mahram men. So Islamicoutlet.co.uk has now launched a new service whereby we guarantee that your photos will be developed in a 100% Halal environment by Muslim woman [sic.]."

How long will it be before non-Muslim women make use of the service to develop those embarrassing topless beach shots?



IN THE TEAROOM

GORDON BROWN's personal anger-management programme is set to face its toughest test to date. The formerly short-fused chancellor has been doing very well lately. When Geoff Hoon presumed to lecture him in cabinet on the perils of a return to tax-and-spend, Brown took three deep breaths and willed his blood-pressure to settle, suggesting the defence secretary minded his own business in the most scrupulously polite terms.

He even managed to keep his cool when, for the second time, the prime minister most imprudently pledged to achieve European levels of health spending without checking with the Treasury first. And when the transport secretary Stephen Byers "contaminated" Brown's big news day by trying to bury further Railtrack bad news under his pre-budget statement, the chancellor took himself into a zen-like trance, maintaining a degree of sang-froid that amazed his Number 11 team.

But now the transport secretary and the prime minister are cooking up a scheme that could send the chancellor incandescent once again. Byers wants to do a deal with Ken Livingstone whereby the London mayor drops unpopular plans for traffic congestion charging, and in return the government abandons the equally unpopular public-private partnership scheme for the London underground.

Tony Blair, anxious to look like a "listening prime minister" and to mend fences with the unions, is tempted to agree. Brown has invested a great deal of personal and political credibility in the PPP. Will the chancellor suffer the appalling humiliation of being publicly worsted by the hated Ken and the weaselly Byers without bursting a blood vessel? Only if he sticks with the programme.

'Urquhart'

WHO *does* want Gordon Brown to be prime minister – apart from Gordon, that is?

Currently Brown can rely on cabinet colleagues such as the nominal deputy PM, John Prescott, as well as Margaret Beckett, Clare Short and Alastair Darling. But this is before any recession dents his chances.

He has assiduously cultivated the union top brass and never misses an opportunity to schmaltz with Labour members in the tea rooms. Which is why Number 10's attempts to build up home secretary David Blunkett as heir apparent is doomed to failure. Blunkett is a lonely, unpopular figure without a political base to match that of the chancellor. He has done nothing to improve his standing with his parliamentary colleagues as they traipse uneasily through the lobbies to chip away at what Blunkett has described as "airy fairy" civil liberties. Which explains why Blunkett is being used as cover by the Blairistas for Brown's real nemesis – new party chairman Charles Clarke.

Clarke, the bluff and burly son of former civil servant mandarin, Otto Clarke, has come a long way since acting as Neil Kinnock's eyes and ears during the benighted 1980s. Clarke disappeared into obscurity during the John Smith interregnum, running a consultancy with another former Kinnock aide, Neil Stewart. A comparatively late entrant to parliament – he was elected for Norwich South in 1997 – Clarke's rise under the tutelage of the Dear Leader has been swift.

Shortly after the last general election Tony Blair appointed Clarke to the new position of Labour party chairman, thus giving him a seat in the cabinet as "minister without portfolio" and a seat on the party's national executive committee. In November Robin Cook announced that he would be stepping down as chairman of the party's influential national policy forum and the new chairman would be... Charles Clarke!

These vantage points have given Clarke unbridled access to the key players who will help shape and decide Blair's eventual replacement – in the parliamentary party, the unions and among Labour members. And Clarke has missed no opportunity to comment on a range of issues from the state of the health service (not enough being done) to the single currency (the sooner we enter the better) which form no part of his brief, and which hugely enrage the brooding chancellor.

Clarke also finds himself in the enviable position of being the main conduit between the Labour party and the media. While more worldly comrades have begun to refer to Clarke as "deputy prime minister", the equally worldly Clarke knows that his strongest ace is his longstanding antipathy towards Gordon Brown. Charles Clarke as Labour leader? Charles Clarke as prime minister? Stranger things have happened.

ONE detail of the Afghan war carefully stressed by the Ministry of Defence in Britain, not to mention the governments of the US and Saudi Arabia, is that the expansive Saudi bases have not been used in any way for the coalition offensive in Afghanistan.

Some doubt is cast on this by *Eye* informants in the region who have been impressed by the enormous increase in military traffic in and around the vast Prince Sultan air base at Al Kharj, about 80 miles south of Riyadh. Huge traffic by land – from Jeddah in the west to Damman in the east – might indicate substantial supply lines to ferry, feed and arm US troops in Afghanistan.

Much of this traffic carries heavy weaponry such as tanks and helicopters that can be reloaded at Al Kharj on to Starlifter and Galaxy heavy freight air-carriers. Security at Al Kharj is enforced more ruthlessly than anywhere else on earth, and all formal inquiries about Saudi involvement in war preparations are relentlessly blocked or denied. This is because the Saudi dynasty is still terrified of their countryman, the millionaire Osama bin Laden, who so furiously opposed the use of Saudi territory to launch the Gulf war in 1990 and 1991.

SMART people who want to show off their Afghan expertise spell the al-Qaeda leader's name as Usama bin Laden. And an even smarter bod at the ministry of defence decided two weeks ago to start referring to him as "ubl" (no doubt inspired by Iain Duncan Smith's cool transformation into IDS).

Having written his briefing paper, however, the mandarin has second thoughts, and ordered the search-and-replace function on his computer to substitute "Usama bin Laden" for "ubl". Thus it was that puzzled ministers and senior military wallahs received a document in which the word "trouble" (which occurred with worrying frequency) had been changed throughout to troUsamabinLadene.

SCIENCE minister Lord Sainsbury continues to appoint businessmen and not scientists to Britain's research councils, the funding bodies which distribute millions of pounds and effectively shape academic research in the UK.

Last month, considering how best to help the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC), Sainsbury turned to Britain's crumbling rail system for inspiration. He made Peter Warry, who sits on the board of the rail regulator, chairman of PPARC; and appointed David Steeds, a rail privatisation expert, to its board.

Warry, an engineer and accountant, also sits on the board of Kier and Thames Water. Kier is being prosecuted for bribery in South Africa while Thames is one of Britain's top polluters. Steeds is also an accountant who worked both for top privatiser Serco and for the "Private Finance Panel", a treasury board which handed government PFI contracts to firms like... Serco.

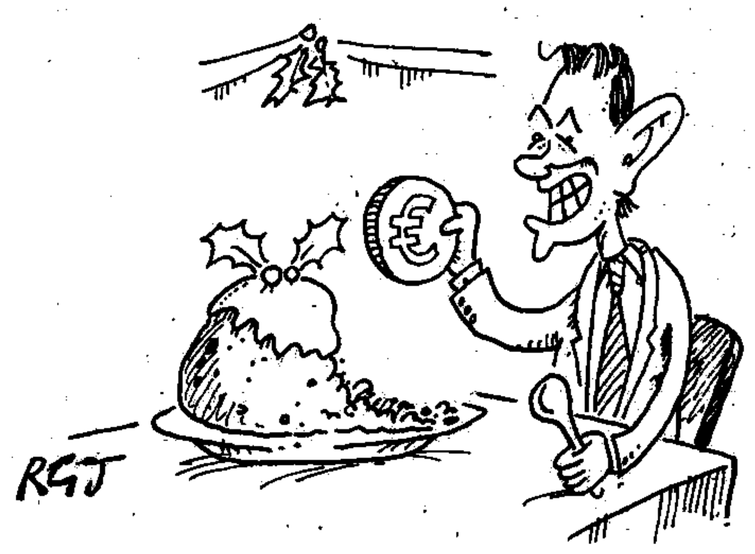
When Sainsbury announced Steeds' appointment he highlighted the fact that "he worked with Serco Group plc leading the development of its PFI business and bidding to London Underground for its Public Private Partnership". Not only is the tube PPP slowly collapsing, but Serco's bid for it was unsuccessful. Will Britain's cosmology, astronomy and particle physics research now disappear in a cosmic puff too?

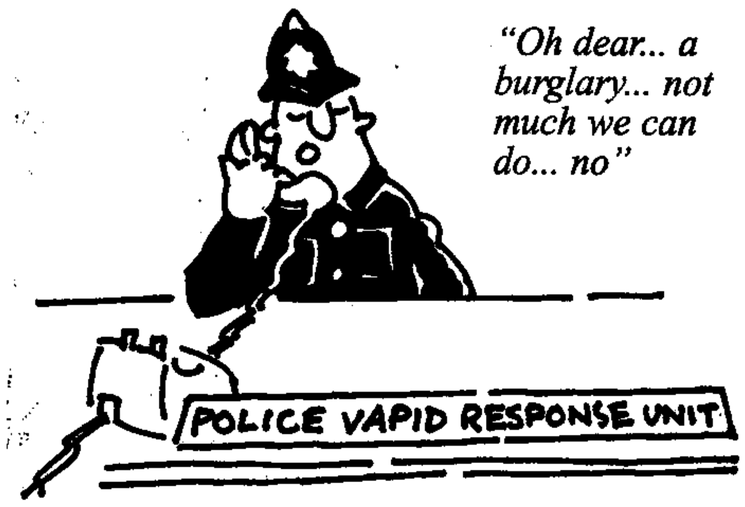
NORTH of the border, the noble profession of political lobbyists burnt by the Beattie-gate saga in the dawn of the Scottish parliament (see *Eyes passim*) has risen from the ashes with the ascension to power of Jack "the Knife" McConnell.

Scotland's third first minister in as many years is unlikely to be supportive of the anti-lobbyist witch-hunt spearheaded by Scot Nat MSP Tricia Marwick, the deputy convenor of the parliament's standards committee. Lobbyists became the scourge of Scottish politics in 1999 when two employees of Beattie Media, Kevin Reid, son of Northern Ireland secretary John Reid, and his colleague Alex Barr were caught on tape by the *Observer* claiming they had easy access to politicians including the then Scottish finance minister and former Beattie Media employee, Jack McConnell.

The new tourism minister in McConnell's cabinet, Labour peer Lord Mike Watson, used to work for Edinburgh-based lobbyists PS Communications. Meanwhile the Scottish Parliament and Business Exchange, launched at the end of last month to give MSPs direct experience of the private sector via placements in member companies, is adamant that it is non-lobbying, non-partisan, transparent and open. The first candidate is Labour MSP Margaret Jamieson, who is being seconded to the pharmaceutical giant, Pfizer. Corporate members of the Exchange pay fees on a sliding scale. Companies with a turn-over of more than £1000m a year are asked to pay £6,000 to join, and several have already signed up, including Pfizer and British Energy. In early 2002 the Exchange is launching its first "industry programme" looking into the subject of... energy.

The standards committee has not given up the ghost, however. It remains determined to push through the compulsory registration of commercial lobbyists in the face of vocal opposition from those affected.





"Oh dear... a burglary... not much we can do... no"

HOW DEMOCRACY WORKS: Freedom Of Information

ON 13 November Liberal Democrat MP Matthew Taylor put down this question to Tony Blair: "To ask *the prime minister* what recommendations he has made with regard to the timetable on which the rights of access in the freedom of information 2000 act will come fully into force; and if he will place a copy of those recommendations in the library."

The prime minister's answer, on 22 November, was as follows: "Paragraph 16 of the ministerial code makes clear that the internal process through which a decision has been made should not be disclosed. Exemption 2 of the code of practice on access to government information applies."

Got that?

THE ministry of defence is to ignore the findings of a public consultation it sponsored on attitudes to the disposal of nuclear waste from royal navy submarines.

The MoD is searching for ways to get rid of the engines of defunct nuclear subs; and contractors at the two privately-run nuclear shipyards at Rosyth and Plymouth want to store the radioactive scrap on dry land, to the alarm of people living nearby.

According to defence minister Lewis Moonie, the MoD commissioned the consultation by Lancaster University's Centre for the Study of Environmental Change to show that it had been "open and consultative from the start". Though Moonie "welcomed" the document and claimed he would consider it carefully, the resulting MoD press release did not reveal its substance or that its findings echoed those of local campaigners against nuclear waste.

In fact the consultation revealed very little support for the view that "Devonport is the most practicable place to dismantle the submarines and store the wastes" but enormous public opposition to the navy's two private contractors – Babcock in Scotland and Brown & Root in Plymouth. "The MoD are seen as secretive and pursuing their own agenda. Contractors, for example, are perceived as profit driven, whilst regulators are seen as powerless, in cahoots with or at least siding with those they are regulating," said the report.

The Lancaster team found the public very hostile to the nuclear privatisers, contractors being seen as "fundamentally compromised by their necessity to prioritise profits. This brought them in direct conflict with the strongly articulated position that safety should be prioritised over costs."

One recommendation was that "the appropriate bodies should be informed of the strength of feeling against building further nuclear-powered submarines, especially in relation to the absence of a final disposal route for the radioactive wastes".

Moonie responded by concluding that private firms would continue to handle waste, nuclear subs would still be built – and planned on-land nuclear storage would be announced next year. In short, the public have been consulted… and ignored.

EVERYONE at the ministry of defence was tremendously relieved by the latest report on defence projects carried out by the national audit office (NAO).

The NAO found that the MoD had lost a mere £58m on two main projects: £33m went down the drain in "obsolescence costs" on the Eurofighter project (the equipment was obsolescent when it came to be used); and on the advanced short range air-to-air missile (ASRAAM), technical problems wasted another £25m.

Lord Bach, minister for defence procurement, thought these figures wonderful. "The report is very encouraging," he said. "It shows that we are controlling costs."

ALMS FOR THE ARMS EXPORTER

IF YOU have exported arms-related equipment to Saddam Hussein's Iraq, lied about it and then tried to pay yourself a million dollars as part of the bargain, you should apply at once to the home office for compensation by the taxpayer.

On 8 November David Blunkett, home secretary, announced that he was going to pay a large sum of taxpayers' money in compensation to Paul Henderson, former chairman of Matrix Churchill. Mr Henderson's company provided parts for a prototype nuclear gas centrifuge for uranium enrichment in Iraq, described on export documents as "goods: metal parts".

In April 1990, four months before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a final consignment of these goods was despatched to Iraq. Mr Henderson told the *Financial Times* (13 Feb 1996) that this consignment went out against his instructions. The *FT* also quoted from records of an MI6 meeting with Mr Henderson. The MI6 officer used the name John Balsom, and the MI6 account of the meeting said that Mr Henderson was "withholding the complete truth from us about this incident".

Yet another contract to supply Iraq with arms-related equipment was signed at the time by Matrix Churchill. This was for lathes built to fix helical fin stabilisers on to artillery shells which, as a result, had a range far superior to anything available to NATO at the time. This use of the lathes was not disclosed on the export documents and the end-user, an Iraqi arms factory, was concealed.

Mr Henderson and two other directors of Matrix Churchill were prosecuted by the department of trade for breach of the regulations controlling arms exports. They did not deny that they had illegally exported arms to the Iraqi dictator, nor even that they had lied about those exports. Their defence was that the government had known about their arms dealing and had encouraged them to continue with it.

The three men became heroes of the *Daily Mail*, and made much of the fact that their business has been ruined by a false prosecution. Mr Henderson let it be known that he was forced out of his company by the prosecution.

Er, not exactly. His resignation from Matrix Churchill came soon after it was revealed that a million dollars had been transferred from Matrix Churchill's sister company in the US into Mr Henderson's secret bank account in Liechtenstein. Matrix's Iraqi directors heard about this transfer and promptly sacked the US company's chief executive. Mr Henderson asked the Liechtenstein bank to reverse the transaction, which it did, and soon afterwards he resigned from the parent company and from Matrix Churchill without compensation.

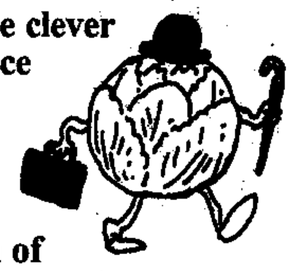
It is therefore quite obvious that Mr Henderson is eligible for many hundreds of thousands of pounds of British taxpayers' money in compensation. Mr Blunkett, whose party once denounced the Tories for the whole arms-to-Iraq scandal, cannot wait to get the money out of the coffers of the taxpayer and into those of the former arms-exporters to Saddam.

Katharine Viner £$^blah blah blah blah

ghgghg

Grauniad

BRUSSELS SPROUTS



NEVER underestimate the clever and sensitive Europeans. Once again the Old World has demonstrated its superiority over the Latins of the New World – this time on the delicate and artistic question of maladministration and diversion of funds.

European commission auditors have revealed that from the 16.6 million euros (around £10.4m) which the commission gave to the Institute for European-Latin American Relations (IRELA) in the five years from 1994, no less than 26 percent – 4,407,712.14 euros (around £2.7m) has gone walkabout.

The IRELA think-tank, based in Madrid, was founded in 1985 and was run for years by Wolf Grabendorff, an ultra-pushy former German TV reporter with a taste for expensive restaurants, smart hotels and comfortable air travel above his station.

Grabendorff, too, has gone walkabout leaving Madrid and the staff, including his English deputy Andrew Crawley over whom he had ridden roughshod for so long, with unpaid salaries and a nightmare of chaos. If we are to understand the fractured English of the Spanish auditors, Grabendorff, inter alia, paid himself thousands of euros too much, collected an unauthorised 54,385.04 euros (£34,073) for the rent of his Madrid flat, paid himself unauthorised fees on top of his salary and trousered much of the 431,566.59 euros (£270,388) of EU taxpayers' money which went on expenses such as business class air travel when only economy was allowed.

For no good reason he paid one of his staff, Vincenz "Gotterdammerung" Wagner, 23,262.79 euros (£14,574) for a business course in Chicago, European business schools apparently not being good enough for IRELA.

Since the auditors arrived IRELA's board has not chosen to meet lest the shit dripping from the fan fell on their well-tailored suits. Result: chaos and unpaid salaries for those who have laboured to rescue IRELA from the Grabendorff era. OLAF, the EU fraud buster, has now gone in and, according to nods and winks from the Spanish government, Grabendorff, Gotterdammerung and others should prepare to have their collars felt early next year.

Years too late a report by Freddy Blak, the Danish Socialist MEP, of the European parliament's committee on budgetary control recorded, among other things, last month that it "regrets the commission's hesitant reaction to the warning signs of problems in IRELA".

The question is whether any of the missing euros remain in the personal accounts of the high-living officials responsible for the IRELA mess. British MEPs will surely be keeping their constituents informed of the hunt for the cash and, with Blak, will make sure the straight and loyal people remaining in IRELA are not sold down the river.

"With our computerised phone system, we can now put twice as many callers on hold"

TV

Record Of The Year (ITV1)
I Love Top Of The Pops (BBC2)

THE two main terrestrial broadcasters have had an exceptionally fractious year. Bruised at starting a football season without football and without Desmond Lynam, the BBC then publicly and privately gloated at the failure of *The Premiership*.

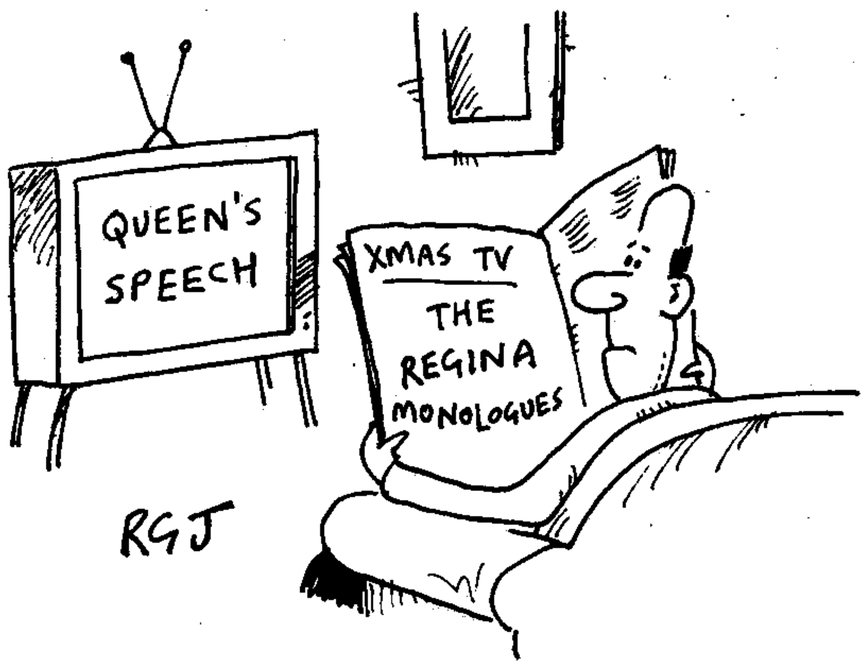
ITV1 boss David Liddiment retaliated with a McTaggart speech in Edinburgh, claiming that the commercial channel was now the place where you were most likely to find public service broadcasting. Finally, just when they should have been writing their Christmas cards, the two sides had a massive case of handbags over the question of whether BBC1's *Only Fools And Horses* could feature a spoof of ITV1's *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?*

The penultimate weekend of ordinary programming in 2001 was conducted entirely in tune with this petty and spiteful mood. The shows seemed calculated more to send messages to each other than entertainment to the audience.

For example, Saturday night on BBC2 was a curious thing. Even in the welcome-outstaying history of theme nights, there has been a tacit agreement that the bolted-together shows must contain some original material. But here was a theme night — **I Love Top Of The Pops**, billed as "an evening devoted to the famous pop music show, introduced by former host Jimmy Savile" — which consisted of a trilogy of re-runs: a doc about *TOTP*, a Smashie & Nicie spoof and an old documentary about Pan's People. Only the brief "guys and gals" intro by Sir Jimmy was fresh.

Why would this be? The answer lay on ITV1 which was screening at the same time **Record Of The Year**, its latest attempt to play in the hole left by *The Premiership*. Featuring the Top Ten hits of the previous 2001, introduced by a couple of twentysomethings tapping their feet on the gantry, this was such a covetous copy of the BBC's *Top Of The Pops* format that it seemed to have provoked the corporation to put together at the last minute what can only be interpreted as a spoiler.

This may have been unnecessary, though, as *Record Of The Year* itself seemed well designed to persuade viewers to go somewhere else. There were two big problems with the format and both were the latest examples of regular television mistakes.



The first was golden goosism. Having had welcome hits with *Pop Stars* and *Pop Idol*, ITV has obviously calculated that pop always pays and so has scratched around for any series in which the camera can inspect the tonsils of some open-throated lad or lass belting out a number.

But the point of *Pop Stars* and *Pop Idol* is that they were contests for wannabes in which the result greatly mattered to those taking part. In *Record Of The Year*, multi-millionaires mime or perform yet again songs which they already know to be hits. Can any of them really give a toss if they win or not?

The second problem is that the presenters are kids' hosts trying to make the transition to the grown-ups. While those attempting this journey can point for luck to Chris Tarrant as a successful generation-jumper, there's a worrying list of those who have remained marooned in the popular mind as kiddie hosts: Anthea Turner, Philip Schofield, Andi Peters, Keith Chegwin.

Formerly known as Ant and Dec, the two Geordie chappies who became famous with the Saturday morning wake-up show on ITV are now captioned as Ant McPartlin and Declan Donnelly. Standing stiffly on a gantry — looking for all the world like Tony Blackburn and David Hamilton played by Action Men — they oddly never looked at the other when he was speaking, preferring to stare straight ahead, perhaps in a bad case of Autocue-insecurity.

Apart from an interlude in a Newcastle record store, intended to establish that People Like Them, Anthony and Declan mainly stood there introducing bursts of groups with a fellatial way with cordless microphones, including Atomic Kitten.

It was desperate stuff, like a pop video with boring bits stuck in between the songs. Hoping to make themselves seem older, the artists formerly known as Ant and Dec went too far, the drab retro-format making them seem like stars who had peaked in the 1970s.

Still it serves the squabbling ugly sisters of BBC and ITV right. Two shows scheduled to rip the audience away from each other will have had the unusual effect of encouraging sensible viewers to rush to a third option.

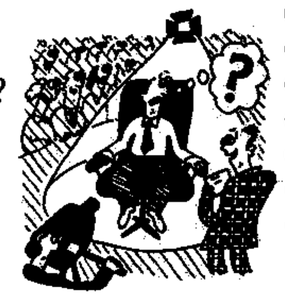
'Square Eyes'

DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link, BBC1/2

Anne Robinson: Which of the Marx Brothers remained silent throughout all of their films?
Contestant: Karl.
AR: In cockney rhyming slang, which piece of furniture would you associate with the phrase "Cain and Abel"?
Contestant: Chair.

The Biggest Game In Town, ITV



Steve Le Fevre: What was signed to bring the First World War to an end in 1918?
Contestant: Magna Carta.

Shafted, ITV

Robert Kilroy Silk: What type of vegetable was the surname of James Bond producer Albert "Cubby"...?
Contestant *(who has bet £10,000 that she will know this)*: Cucumber.

And Dumb America...

The Weakest Link, NBC

Anne Robinson: What "H" was the hereditary disease carried by Queen Victoria?
Contestant: Syphilis.

MEDIA NEWS

BBC director-general Greg Dyke's mission to put £166m of licence-payer's money back into programme-making is producing reams of paperwork and lifting the lid on John Birt's time as D-G.

For example, the "hospitality guidelines" recently sent to BBC producers are designed to temper those appetites Birt did nothing to discourage. Hospitality for meetings is now only to be allowed "where the meeting needs to be for two hours or longer". Even then "biscuits will not be provided". Furthermore, the BBC "will not generally expect to pay for... staff gifts, birthday parties, anniversary or new baby celebrations, bespoke cakes, flowers as gifts or drinks trolleys" – all of which were acceptable to the Birtistas.

The aim is to save £33m over the next three years. But even now there's a get-out clause: "The exceptions to this policy are where the expense is being incurred for the benefit of the business." Whatever that may mean.

ANDREW NEILL has been trying to revive the fortunes of *Despatch Box*, the Beeb's hopeless political programme, by enlivening proceedings with off-the-cuff gags.

Best of all was his ad-lib inspired by news that "booze can make you pregnant" and the story about how new research suggests women who consume moderate amounts of alcohol may find it easier to conceive.

"That's why I never buy 'em drinks beforehand... ha ha ha!" quipped the sweating lothario while his studio guests gritted their teeth.

TABOO
A SERIOUS STUDY OF CENSORSHIP...
AND A SERIOUS ANALYSIS...
WITH A SERIOUS PRESENTER...
PROVIDING A SERIOUS EXCUSE...
TO SHOW A SERIOUS AMOUNT OF TITS & BUMS
Ken Pyne

★ The Little Book of Dumb Britain. Now on sale – £1.99 ★

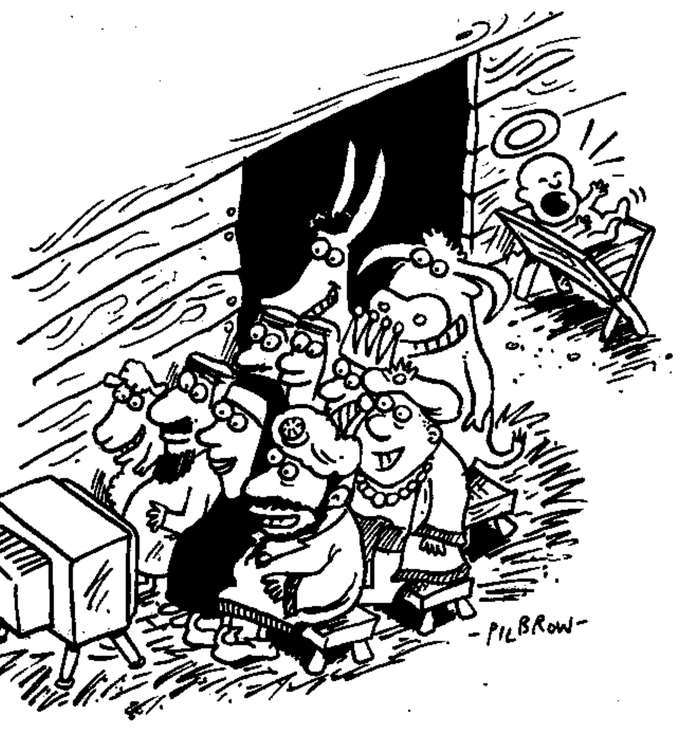
STAFF have certainly noticed now that Trillium has been brought in to run the BBC properties. One luckless producer was locked out of her office in Broadcasting House, and found the procedure for gaining entry had changed.

Before Trillium it was…

1. Ring security.
2. Security would come and open the door.

After Trillium it is…

1. Ring security.
2. Security refuses to open door. Says the producer has to ring 047 for Trillium – and Trillium has to ask security to open the door.
3. Ring Trillium.
4. Operator at Trillium has no idea what Broadcasting House is.
5. The producer explains what Broadcasting House is.
6. Eventually the operator works out what building the producer is referring to, rings up security, and gives the producer a reference number – a seven-digit number for the job of "opening a door".
7. The producer waits. Security doesn't arrive.
8. The producer rings Trillium back, but she hasn't written down the code, because she assumes it isn't worth it for such a simple request.
9. The operator can't check up on the job without the code number.
10. The producer gives up and works in a colleague's office.



GOING LIVE

GMTV went live to reporter Jackie Brambles in Los Angeles on 30 November for the latest on the recently announced death of George Harrison.

"The feeling we've got here is that George's treatment hasn't worked," she helpfully revealed as tributes to the dead Beatle poured in.

EVER since he was appointed chairman of the Arts Council three years ago, "new" Labour's favourite donor, the catering and media millionaire Gerry Robinson, has been carrying on the same bullying management style that ruined Granada. The result is that almost everyone who works for the council and is interested in the arts is thoroughly demoralised.

Robinson's master plan was to do away with the old structure, whereby regional arts boards ran themselves, and to centralise management so that chairman Gerry's plans could more easily be put into effect. To his horror Mr Robinson found his proposals ran up against something he hardly ever encountered at Granada: sustained opposition.

The heads of arts council regional boards are not paid and have nothing to lose by insisting that their credibility and the work of their staff depends on their autonomy. Robinson's plans to propel them all into a national council under his chairmanship and direction disgust them.

In July, six heads of regional arts boards wrote to culture secretary Tessa Jowell, denouncing Robinson's proposals as "fundamentally flawed". They added: "The arts council has behaved in recent months with a lack of competence and a lack of integrity."

Officers of regional boards have been dismayed at Robinson's optimism. His promise to the *Times* on 28 May 1998 that he would meet each arts council panel chairman "several times a year" has not been kept. In September a trade union survey of members working for the arts council showed that 80 percent had no confidence in their chairman. Another earlier survey showed that of the 1,120 people who responded to Robinson's proposals, 48 percent were "completely negative" and 5 percent "completely positive".

Despite overwhelming hostility to his plans, Mr Robinson still has the support of ministers. Former culture secretary Chris Smith was slightly worried about the proposals, but he was sacked in June. His successor, the ultimate Blairite Tessa Jowell, and her back-up in the Lords Tessa Blackstone will go on supporting Gerry to the hilt rather as former Labour ministers stubbornly supported other business heroes such as Bob Ayling, until he was sacked at British Airways, and Martin Taylor, until he was sacked at Barclays Bank.

In an embarrassing hagiography of Gerry Robinson by William Kay, entitled *Lord of the Dance*, Gerry ruefully compares the miseries of "scurrying around London" with the delights of working in his enormous garden in Donegal. Maybe it's time for him to abandon the former for the latter.

AD NAUSEAM

A VERY merry Christmas to everyone in adland, or at least to the five or six of us who still have jobs.

With Saatchi parent company Cordiant dispatching a further 400 unfortunates just in time for the Christmas party, it's a bleak midwinter for Soho's young Turks. So imagine how the newly-jobless must have been cheered by the largesse of several of their very own agency creative directors, who on a whim recently decided to auction off "works of art" they had created for charity.

Industry swells including Mark "*Sunday Times*" Wnek and *Eye*-pal Trevor Beattie each paid thousands of pounds to acquire the others' cast-offs – like framed lunch bills (for £999.60) from the Ivy and suchlike. The recession appears to have hit some harder than others.

Meanwhile back in the real world the Christmas rush means advertising goes back to basics: shout it loud, sell it cheap and if that doesn't work, get a celebrity. All power then to Argos, which has had the courage to dispense with celebrity and concentrate instead on blanket coverage. Creatives at agency Ogilvy will have

been handsomely paid to come up with an animated snowboarding Santa backed with Slade's "Merry Xmas Everybody". Wonder at the magic, experience the joy.

In among promos for powertools and the magnificent new album from the Lighthouse Family, the holy trinity of UK retail, WHSmiths, M&S and Sainsbury's, are all back on the treadmill with a selection of stinkers. WHSmiths' customary Nicholas Lyndhurst vignettes were all set to have the "Smith" family, all played by a prosthetically enhanced Lyndhurst, flying to America to visit their US relatives. Alas, 11 September put paid to that and, with the client panicking, agency Abbott Mead Vickers hurriedly had to rustle up an alternative. In the ads that are broadcast, the Smiths visit relatives in Newcastle, but even that hasn't been an easy ride. Complaints have flooded in from Geordieland, because the northern cousins are depicted as fat slobs who are incapable of getting up from the sofa. The Independent Television Commission is on the case.

For M&S this was its debut year in television advertising – and look how far it has come. Its first Christmas sees agency Rainey Kelly Campbell Roalfe tearing up the rulebook and doing a feelgood number with some resting celebrities. Zoe Ball, Hugh Laurie and Julian Clary all feature in the "Christmas in three words" campaign. The sight of Stephen Redgrave, the near-mythological five-times Olympian, skipping gaily away like a playful fawn suggests that few things can't be spoilt by the glint of filthy lucre.

Indeed, some people would sell their granny for money – Jamie Oliver, for example, who is on the verge of pocketing another £1m for being Sainsbury's pedigree chump. Oliver has recorded a remarkable 17 ads to make our lives taste better and this TV series, known to cynics as *The Naked Greed*, makes perfect family viewing because most of Oliver's family are in it.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

Christmas Shopping……
I JUST NEED A COUPLE OF STOCKING FILLERS
MODEL-U
COSMETIC SURGERY
MY BOYFRIEND SAYS THEY DON'T LOOK VERY SEXY ON ME!
HMM…. YOU'LL NEED LEG-ENHANCEMENT. ….MAYBE SOME COLLAGEN AROUND THE KNEES!
SAG!

DOING THE ROUNDS

HEALTH secretary Alan Milburn has postponed his response to the Bristol inquiry report (see last Eye) in favour of fire-fighting the disastrous state of the NHS depicted by ousted Natwest bank manager and treasury stooge Derek Wanless.

According to Wanless, under investment in the NHS between 1972 and 1998 compared to the EU average comes to just £276bn. And now, after the best economic cycle for 40 years, even Labour party chairman Charles Clarke admits "in many ways the NHS has gone backwards in the last five years". The NHS may have been much praised around the world, but it's never been copied.

The most obvious conclusion of Wanless – that politicians are not fit to run a health service – seems not to have occurred to Milburn, Tony Blair or Gordon Brown. "New" Labour's plans of no one waiting more than 48 hours for a GP appointment by 2003, four hours in A&E by 2004, or six months for an operation by 2005, look as if they were cooked up in Teletubby land.

Still Milburn spins on, dumping the hopes of the waiting list extras on the BUPA Redwood hospital in Redhill ,Surrey, which will now carry out an extra 5,000 NHS operations a year from next April. The Redwood has a splendid deep shaggy pile carpet – but not for much longer, I fear.

This was swiftly followed by plans to allow anyone waiting six months or more for heart surgery (if they're still alive) to go anywhere to get it done. Abroad or at home, private or NHS. These grand gestures could conceivably make a blip in some indicator or other in time for the next election, but they are ominous in their failure to mention safety and quality.

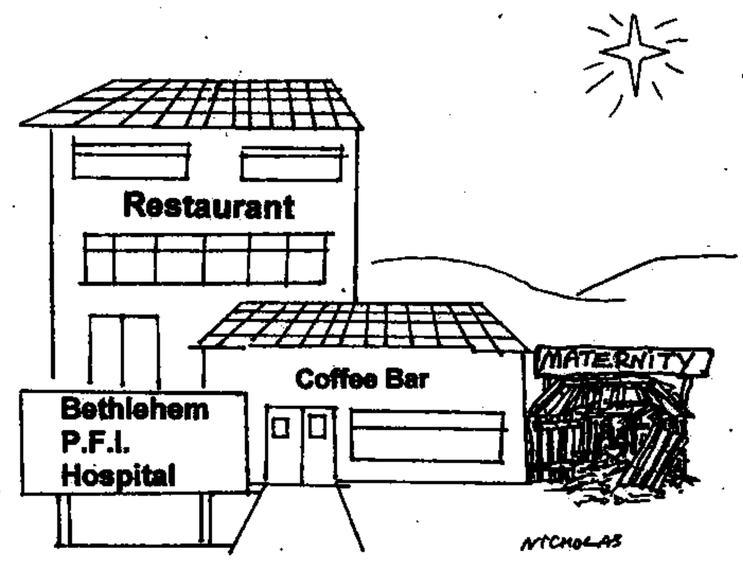
Private hospitals have far worse emergency provision than the NHS, but private patients tend to survive because money also buys health and they are usually fit for surgery. But filling these hospitals with frailer NHS patients who may develop complications is a quick fix but not always a safe one.

Given the disaster of Bristol, farming heart patients out all over the place without first *defining* and enforcing acceptable safety standards is inviting trouble. A surgical unit may have a short waiting list because it is very efficient, or because local doctors have heard on the grapevine that it should be avoided at all costs. From a distance, it appears very attractive. Closer up, perhaps less so. Ignoring the Bristol report in favour of waiting list games could well rebound on Labour.

But the real losers in Milburn's quest to save his career are likely to be patients with non-sexy illnesses. Lung disease is the biggest killer in the NHS, yet it receives a fraction of the publicity, resources or research funding of heart disease and "sexier" cancers. And unfashionable strokes cost the country even more than heart disease: £2.3bn a year with patients occupying 20 percent of acute hospital days and 25 percent of long-term beds. Ironically, we spend more per patient in the UK on stroke care than most other EU countries but have worse death and disability results. The problem here is organisational: we've known for more than 10 years that patients treated on specialist stroke units do better but at present only 26 percent of them are. Many patients with stroke don't get the medication they need to reduce the risk of another stroke or the rehabilitation to get better, so they end up in long-term care costing the country a fortune.

"I suggest treatment abroad. Try Lourdes"

Osteoporosis is another Cinderella disease costing the NHS £1bn a year. It causes more than 200,000 fractures a year of the hip, spine and wrist and, as with stroke, there are effective treatments to prevent further fractures but less than 10 percent of patients receive them. The government at least has produced a "cost neutral" National Service Framework (NSF) for the Elderly, with clear targets to address these problems, but as with the rest of the NHS plan, they require not just funding but major shifts in organisation and manpower that central political control just isn't able to deliver. Last week, delegates at the annual osteoporosis conference in Bath were asked to vote on whether the government's NSF or the recruitment of Camilla Parker Bowles to the National Osteoporosis Society would do more to get patients the treatment they deserve. As ever, Camilla came out on top. Move over Milburn.



ONE NHS hospital has come up with a novel answer for patients frustrated by postponed operations: bring your own surgical toolkit.

Winnie Thompson, 85, from Stokesley, North Yorkshire, was booked into the Friarage hospital, Northallerton, in August for a simple operation to remove a small spur of bone protruding from her left foot. But the operation was postponed, again and again.

Eventually Winnie phoned the secretary of the consultant, Lukas Van Vuuren, who was due to do the op to demand an explanation for the delay. The apologetic secretary told her that the actual cause of the cancelled appointments was because the hospital did not possess a suitable saw for the job.

When might they be able to get one, Winnie asked. She was told the best thing would be for her to make a direct approach to the manager for surgical supplies at the Friarage, Steve Jameson, explaining why the saw was needed.

At this point Winnie put the phone down, thinking the secretary was pulling her leg. But she later phoned back, and Mr Van Vuuren's secretary confirmed that it was no joke. A plea from the patient to the manager for surgical supplies, she explained, would carry more weight than a request from a mere consultant surgeon.

When the *Eye* contacted the Friarage hospital the director of nursing and deputy chief executive, Pat Martin, said she could "neither confirm nor deny" the story because "it would breach patient confidentiality". Winnie Thompson's family has now written to her MP, former Conservative leader William Hague, to see if he can sort the matter out.

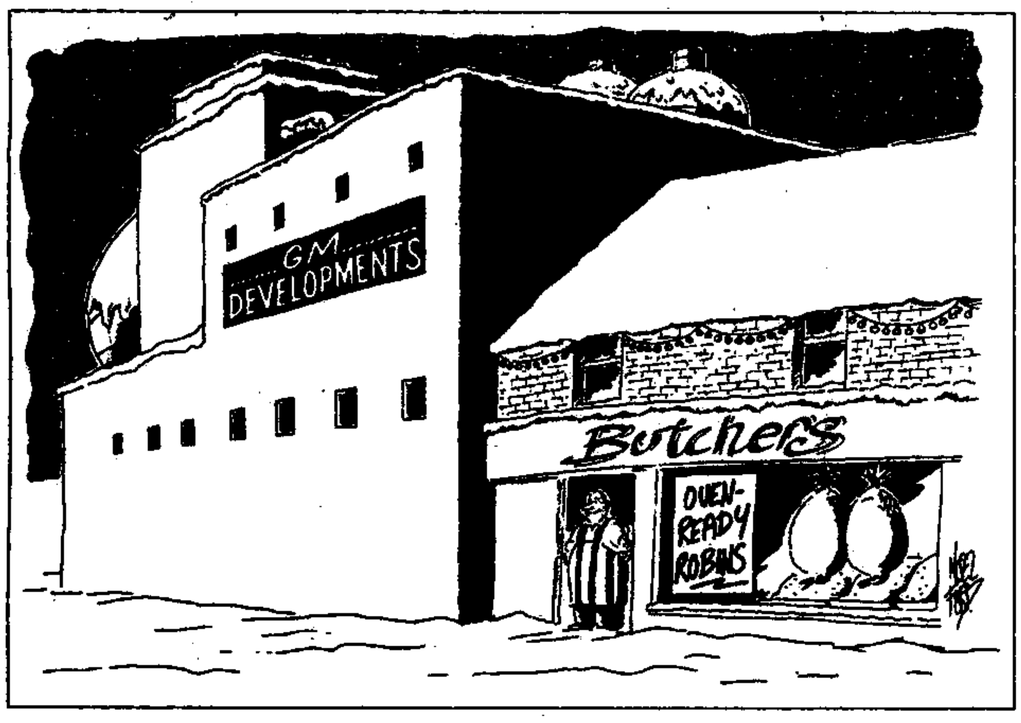
M.D

DOWN ON THE FARM

BRITAIN's farmers will be consoled to know how well those who have been paid to look after their interests manage to look after their own.

Lord Haskins is of course the expert chosen by the Beloved Leader to advise on the future of British farming as his "rural recovery co-ordinator". His chief qualifications for this role were that he was chairman of two large public companies with agricultural links.

Northern Foods is the largest supplier of processed foods to our supermarket chains. Express Dairies is our biggest milk marketing company.



Sadly Lord H has now had to step down as chairman of Express Dairies, shortly after it was found by a *Management Today* poll of Britain's businessmen to be among the top five of the country's "Least Admired Companies".

Its rivals for this coveted title included Railtrack and the now bankrupt Independent insurance company. In tribute to the noble lord's management skills, Express Dairies was singled out for its "inability to innovate" and its "prospects as a long-term investment", which certainly equips him to advise on Britain's rural recovery.

The dynamic figure chosen to replace Lord H as Express Dairies' chairman is none other than Sir David Naish, former boss of the National Farmers' Union. In 1994, it may be recalled, Naish led those who supported the break-up of the old Milk Marketing Board, which at least guaranteed Britain's dairy farmers the chance to sell their milk at the kind of prices enjoyed by their French and Irish competitors. If the main losers from the disappearance of the MMB were the very farmers whom Naish was paid to look after, the main beneficiaries were the big corporate buyers of milk, headed by Northern Foods and Express Dairies.

Not only were they now free to buy milk at ever-lower prices from British farmers. They were also free to import ever greater quantities of surplus milk from other European Union countries which, thanks to the collapsing euro, were more than able to compete on price. Tens of thousands of British dairy farmers have gone out of business as a result. But at least Sir David himself has been able to benefit from a disaster which he and the NFU did as much as anyone else to bring about.

If anyone else did as much to preside over the collapse of British agriculture in recent years it was Richard Packer, the Maffia's top civil servant until last January when he was asked to "take early retirement" in return for a payoff of £500,000. Affectionately known to his intimates as "the barrow boy" or "the ocean-going shit", Packer showed conspicuously little interest in farming as it lurched from one disaster to the next. But he has now made up for this by producing a learned paper on the industry's future for the Centre for Policy Studies.

His chief recommendation is that British farmers would be better off without subsidies, ignoring the fact that all their main competitors are more highly subsidised than they are and that, under the EU's common agricultural policy (CAP), this would not be allowed anyway. He talks blithely about how the CAP is to be reformed next year, apparently oblivious to the fact that this "review" has been officially put off until 2006. It seems he knows even less about farming now than when he was in charge of the ministry. But at least his paper might help earn him that knighthood he was so pointedly not given when he was invited to clear his desk.

'Muckspreader'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

FANTASY ISLAND

ON THE Orkney island of South Ronaldsay, social workers have been less welcome than Jehovah's Witnesses in Kandahar ever since 1991, when they, assisted by police, snatched screaming children from the arms of weeping parents on the basis of nonsensical accusations of satanic abuse.

Later in the 1990s new social services director Dr Avril Osborne (*Eyes passim*) departed with a handsome payoff after Orkney Islands Council (OIC) realised her unconventional management style — ie promoting female members of staff willing to share her bed — wasn't necessarily the way to deliver best value.

These ructions *did not*, however, affect Richmond Villa, a privately owned old folks' home on South Ronaldsay. It was comfortable and well-managed, the residents were happy and the staff were efficient and caring. Everything looked bright — until OIC's social work department stepped in.

After an inspection they told proprietors Jim and Claire Fogarty that numerous changes had to be made. Crucially, they found one of the rooms was a couple of feet too small. The Fogartys were ordered to stop using it. Unable to cope with the loss of income, the Fogartys decided they would have to increase their charges — to about two-thirds of the cost of council-owned care. All the residents agreed to the rise.

But the social work department said it would be illegal to increase the charges. In fact, it wasn't, but the Fogartys believed the department and, facing bankruptcy, gave notice of closure. OIC now had to find accommodation for the oldies itself, finally deciding to convert a building at Finstown, 30 miles away on Orkney Mainland.

Protests from the residents were to no avail, and they were moved to the other island. The social work department's idiocy was exposed in all its glory when it emerged that *all* the new rooms at Finstown were smaller than the one room in Richmond Villa which had been condemned because of its size.

RUSS FUSS

THE Labour party appeared to be on the right lines when it decided that if Doncaster is ever to be cleaned up, the local party must have as little as possible to do with drawing up lists of potential candidates for council elections. With 23 former and serving Doncaster councillors already convicted of false accounting, local input was excluded from this year's scrutiny process.

Alas the regional panel could only scrape together 30 "suitable" people from which the 21 candidates for next May's elections have to be selected. The approved list includes one octogenarian, two septuagenarians and one candidate who spent most of the last 12 months under arrest before escaping by the skin of his teeth. And then — and then there is Russ Williams.

In the early 90s he was sacked from his job as safety inspector at Askern colliery after falsifying readings in dust samples taken from the pit — as a result of which miners were sent to work in dangerously high levels of contamination. He later won £23,000 compensation for the miners' disease vibration white finger via the discredited YCRS compensation scam (see *Eyes* 1017 and 1020), but had to repay the money when it was revealed he had never been anywhere near any kind of machinery that might have caused the condition. He was finally found a job as a youth worker in Doncaster. But earlier this year he was sacked after charges of harassment and bullying were proved against him.

Good to see recruitment of the next generation of squeaky-clean Doncaster councillors is proceeding so well!

●FACING a £3m deficit thanks to mismanagement — sorry, the combined effects of 11 September and foot & mouth — a delegation from Bath and North East Somerset council (Banes) headed for London to plead with local government minister Nick Raynsford for more dosh.

But Banes bosses are not simply waiting to be bailed out by Whitehall. "Stricter guidelines have been introduced across the whole organisation to stop all non-essential spending," writes chief executive John Everitt in a letter to senior staff. Which must be why the six-strong delegation to see Raynsford travelled first-class by rail at a cost of £545 to council taxpayers. A spokesman explained this was to ensure privacy as they discussed tactics. The fact that they could have hired a luxury mini-coach for half that sum, door to door, seems to have escaped Bath's penny-pinchers entirely.

BRAVE NEWHAM WORLD

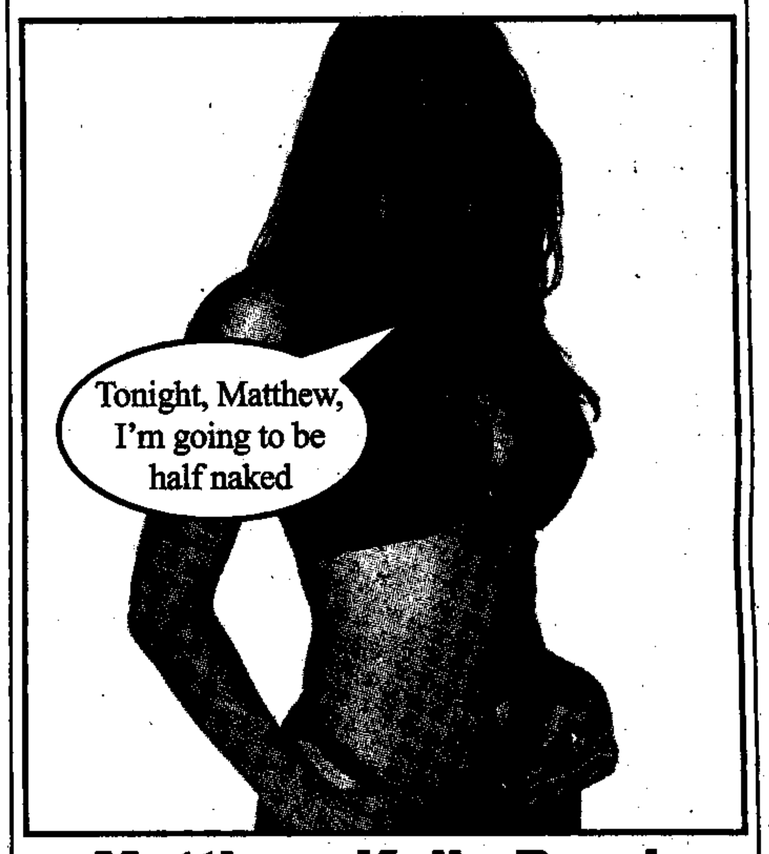
A THE LATEST local authority to dump a private contractor from running its housing benefit (HB) service is Labour-run Newham, which last month terminated its relationship with CSL only two years into a seven-year contract.

The first six months witnessed the backlog of unopened post rising to 45,000 items, an increase of more than 125 percent. A big effort reduced the backlog, but at the expense of claims being processed within statutory time-limits. As a result many claimants were threatened with eviction as their rent went unpaid. Worse followed as the council discovered it stood to lose £2m of housing benefit subsidy from central government as CSL was unable to substantiate all of the benefit payments they had made.

CSL now joins Crapita, which recently had its contracts with Lambeth and Bromley prematurely terminated, ItNet, which bit off more than it could chew in Hackney, and EDS, which was kicked out of Wandsworth, on the roll call of private sector failures. In each case, councils have concluded that HB services are better-run in-house – as they were in the first place.

SPLIT personalities

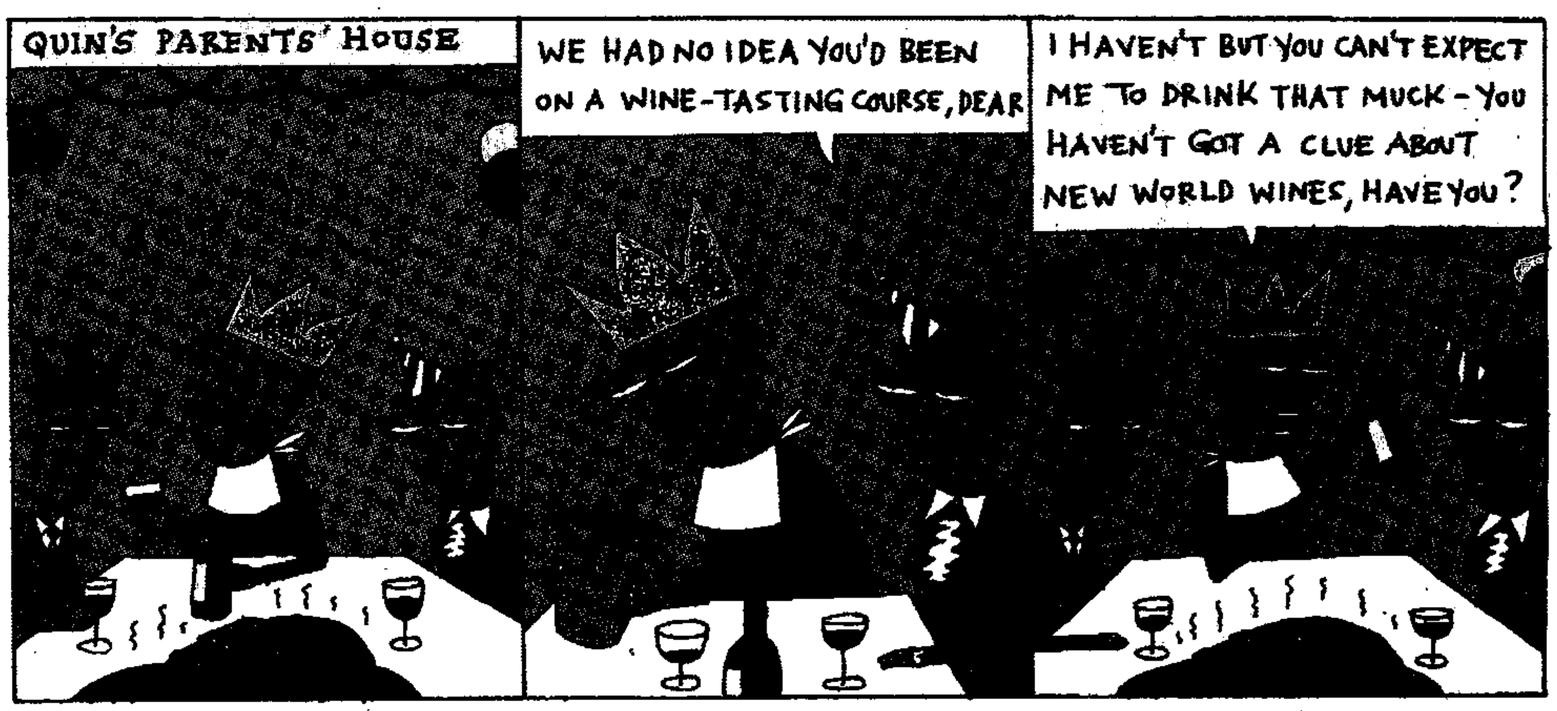
Bob Moore



Matthew Kelly Brook

● DEATH NOTICE of the year. The *Epping Guardian* notes that Mr Len Benton has passed away at the age of 80. "Always a rebel, a champion of causes and people's rights, Len will be sadly missed by his family and many others, except perhaps by a few senior council officers, some councillors and one or two current and ex-MPs... Len... did not want his funeral to be a sad occasion and ... [requested] that CEO John Burgess of EFDC does not attend." A spokesman for Epping Forest district council tells the *Eye*: "Mr Benton had a dispute about traffic calming with the council which continued for several years. We were unable to satisfy him and he held the chief executive among others responsible. Clearly at this time we are sensitive to the feelings of his family and do not think any further comment would be appropriate."

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON – AT XMAS KNIFE & PACKER


QUIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE
WE HAD NO IDEA YOU'D BEEN ON A WINE-TASTING COURSE, DEAR
I HAVEN'T BUT YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO DRINK THAT MUCK - YOU HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE ABOUT NEW WORLD WINES, HAVE YOU?
JEZ'S PARENTS' HOUSE
QUIN, CHRISTMAS WITH THE PARENTS HAS BEEN TURNED INTO UTTER HUMILIATION! I'VE BEEN ROUTED AT CHARADES!
WHY? DID YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF SWEDISH CINEMA LET YOU DOWN?
IF ONLY IT WERE THAT EASY. I FAILED TO IDENTIFY THREE SOAPS, TWO CHANNEL 5 NEWSCASTERS AND WILL SOMEONE TELL ME WHO ON EARTH IS MAEVE BINCHY?!?

★ better latté than never. Now on sale – £4.99 ★

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE East Riding of Yorkshire council is still in the grip of millennium fever — or at least Darryll Stephenson, its dynamic chief executive, is.

Beverley, the old and altogether charming market town, despite having two of the finest medieval churches in Britain — the Minster and St Mary's — and much else, is clearly not grand or modern enough for Darryll (*Eyes passim*). As the council is hung politically, he is able to exercise considerable power and, not content with ensuring that the town has a nice big new Tesco superstore, has now embarked on a plan to create a modern civic and cultural centre next to the County Hall in Champney Road as the future Darryll memorial. This requires a series of sub-Pompidolian *grand projets* for his long-suffering fiefdom.

The first has now been completed: the new courthouse, which leaves the old and handsome Greek Revival Sessions House redundant so it can be converted into a restaurant. The new £22m magistrates' court *(see picture)* is a triumph of sorts as it is the first to be built in Britain under the government's private finance initiative (PFI): a system which ensures that no public money is wasted on frills or architecture. The structure has been built and will be run for 25 years by Modern Courts Humberside Limited, a company formed by John Mowlem & Co. Small print in the publicity material reveals that it has been "designed" by Austin Smith Lord, architects.

So Beverley now shows the way forward in Blairite Britain. The architects have wisely chosen not to try to compete with the celebrated historic buildings of Beverley. Their style is that familiar from the lower sort of shopping developments: a stone-clad concrete frame with a brick infill and flush glazing — with a few simplified pediments to give a "civic" quality. The entrance "portico" is unusual as it has a single, central pier — possibly a witty reference to the Choragic Monument of Thrassylus; possibly not. No matter.

Phase two of Darryll's great plan is to build a "Treasure House", a sort of history and culture centre to try to compete with the existing museums and collections in nearby Beverley and Hull. A planning application has been lodged and the heritage lottery fund approached for the necessary millions. I look forward to seeing the exciting design. Meanwhile, close at hand, is the old Memorial Hall, a building which could perfectly well be used for such cultural purposes but which, owing to mismanagement, is now forlorn and unused. But old buildings have no place in Darryll's vision for Beverley.

What next? I am rather surprised that East Riding council has not offered to take the dome off the government's hands. It could be re-erected over Beverley Minster to protect it from the rain, thus giving a new and much needed image to the town.

THIS column does not usually venture abroad, but sometimes it is necessary. A fine piece of British design which happens to be in France is threatened with obliteration by the French government.

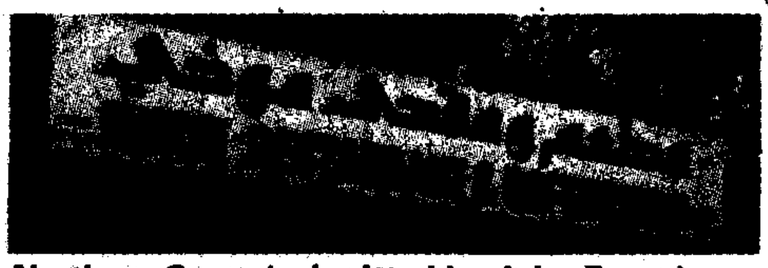
As the Independent has reported, the plan to build a new international airport north of Paris on the Somme requires the removal of three villages and the British War Cemetery at Rosières. This contains the bodies of British soldiers who died defending French soil from Ludendorff's offensive in 1918. Like the 900 or so other cemeteries on the Western Front now maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, it was constructed on land given "in perpetuity" by France. Until now. And spare a thought too for the 22,665 soldiers in the German war cemetery at Vermandovillers who are also to be evicted in the cause of progress, for they were equally the victims of the industrialised slaughter of the Great War.

So much we know. But I am now concerned with architecture — and beauty. The war cemeteries constructed by the Imperial War Graves Commission were products of a rare moment when the British government employed the very best designers and, in the case of Edwin Lutyens, who had a dominant influence on the proper, secular character of the commission's work, an architect of genius. Lutyens was responsible for the abstracted, resonant Classicism of the cemeteries and also encouraged the care given to landscaping and planting which makes them so special, and memorable. Rosières British Cemetery, however, was actually designed by one of the assistant architects, W.H. Cowlishaw, an Arts & Crafts architect best known for the wildly eccentric cloisters at Letchworth Garden City. His work was good.

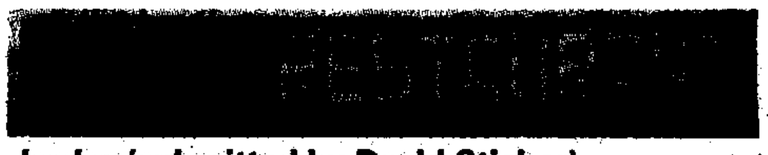
Do we really need more airports? Tony has given Terminal 5 at Heathrow the go-ahead, and Paris is already served by two airports as well as Beauvais, while Charles de Gaulle has recently been enlarged. The proposed Somme airport is to be 80 miles north of Paris on the strategic TGV line north to London and Brussels, and the pressure for it comes from the ailing, inefficient, heavily-subsidised state airline, Air France. So much for strategic planning; so much for European cooperation: the 59 British soldiers who died on French soil defending La France and who lie in a minor masterpiece of architectural and landscape art are to be evicted merely to facilitate la gloire. It is not on.

'Piloti'

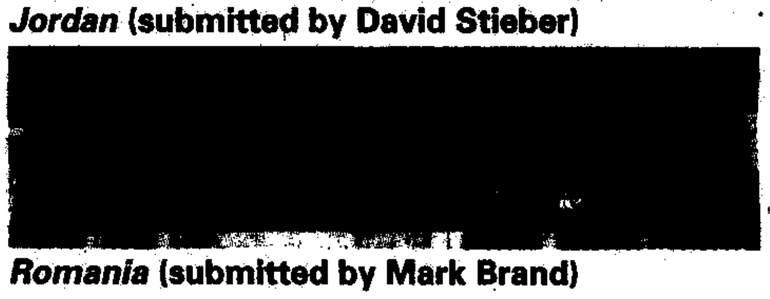
I-SPY



Northern Oman **(submitted by John Evans)**



Jordan **(submitted by David Stieber)**



Romania **(submitted by Mark Brand)**

£10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

COURT CIRCULAR

ACRES of newsprint have been devoted in the last week to a right royal non-story: that, according to the *Times*, "Buckingham Palace is demanding the resignation of Mark Bolland, the Prince of Wales's deputy private secretary".

In fact, far from heading for the chop, Bolland is being lined up to become spin supremo for *all* the royals.

The trouble with Bolland, according to the *Spectator, Telegraph, et al*, is that he has made Charles look good at the expense of the other royals. True enough, but it is what he is paid for. It is also true that the crustier palace officials are not terrifically keen on the fact that Bolland has a live-in boyfriend, Guy Black, who happens to be director of the press complaints commission (PCC), and that he has had some success in promoting Charles and Camilla as an item.

What matters more, however, is that the Queen herself likes Bolland and does not want him fired simply for doing his job. His success in achieving a largely positive press image for Charles in recent months has highlighted the shortcomings of the invisible Simon Walker, Brenda's so-called chief spinner who cocked-up badly over Wessexgate, and the other members of the lacklustre royal press team.

Lord Luce, the lord chamberlain, has now begun his second review of royal media relations with the intention of having one central media office covering the whole royal family, based at Buckingham Palace. It was about this project that Luce recently had a high profile meeting with Charles and which was variously interpreted by the press as being either about the jubilee or Bolland. Luce is treading carefully, because Charles is instinctively hostile to anything which might threaten his independence, but he was certainly not behind the recent attacks on Bolland, as it was suggested last week.

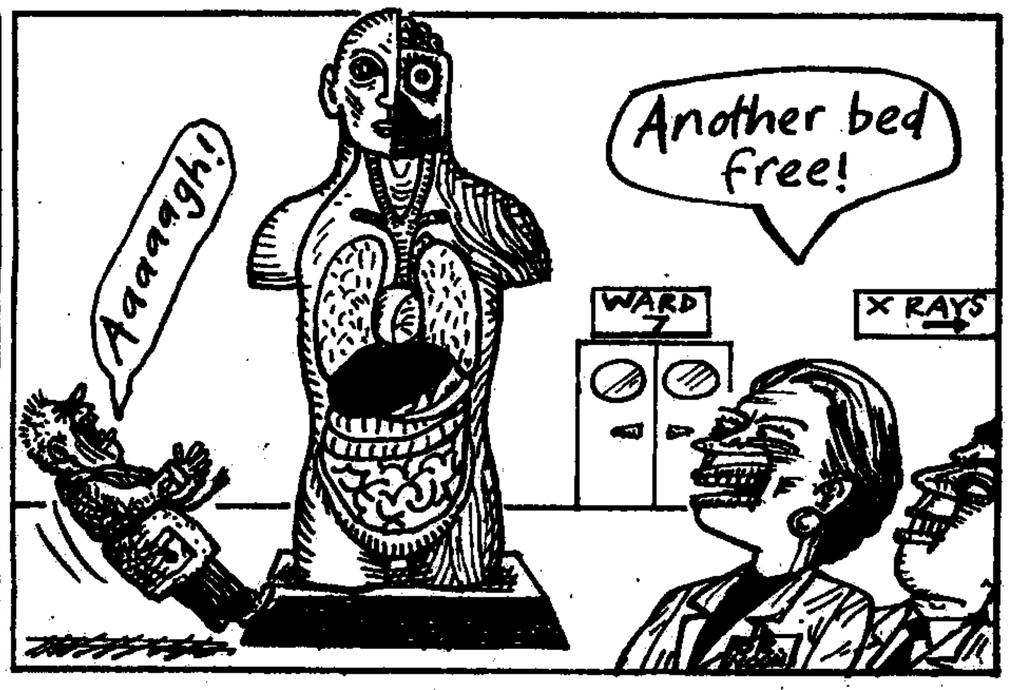
Luce would like the centralised unit in place for when Walker leaves the palace next year at the end of his secondment from British Airways. It would spell the end of the sequence of largely unsuccessful secondments of PR men from the business world which began when Blair forced Simon Lewis of Centrica into the palace to, er, transform the royal image after Diana's death.

Within the palace, Bolland is being tipped as the man to run the new unit, which may be one reason he was passed over for promotion to become Charles's new private secretary next summer. Instead, Sir Michael Peat, transformer of Brenda's finances, will take that hot seat when Stephen Lamport steps down.

Bolland, of course, will have to satisfy Luce that he is the man to be trusted with Brenda's affairs. But if Luce is persuaded that Bolland's relationship with Black will not compromise his role, and if he can stop holidaying with Rebekah Wade, editor of the *News of the World*, his way to the top job is clear.

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH



SIGNAL FAILURES

Hatfield? What Hatfield?

THE media are suffering convenient amnesia in their crusade against transport secretary Stephen Byers.

Journalists backing Railtrack shareholders' attempts to pocket even more public money were delighted to report that delays attributable to Railtrack had increased 45 percent since Railtrack was put into administration and that the railway could be more dangerous now because of low morale.

Delays linked to the rail infrastructure jump every autumn because of leaf fall, but the *Daily Torygraph* revealed that that factor "had been expected to have a lesser effect on performance figures this autumn". For good measure it added that some train operators had "special timetables" (railspeak for mass cancellations) but omitted to say most of those cancellations were due to shortages of drivers or trains.

In their excitement the hacks forgot to mention that in the same period last year punctuality and cancellations on many routes plumbed record depths because of Railtrack's incompetence. A significant proportion of recent delays has been down to the same track problem that caused the Hatfield derailment in October 2000 – showing that Railtrack and its contractors have failed to eliminate the fault.

Morale is low among Railtrack fat cats who had grown accustomed to demanding and getting more cream from the government (*Eye* 1013), but that should have little effect because they weren't managing safety adequately in the first place. Morale among the staff who uphold safety standards may not have suffered as much because there is at least a hope that something better than Railtrack is on the way.

If a serious accident occurs while Railtrack is in administration, the media will seek ways to blame Byers and prime minister Tony Blair could have a tricky problem on his hands. For the moment, Byers' biggest embarrassment is not Railtrack's poor performance but that he had no replacement lined up when he ordered Railtrack's demise. Devising that replacement is bound to be time-consuming and should have been started by "new" Labour after the Ladbroke Grove crash in 1999, if not earlier. Now it's vital that time and care are taken to create the right solution, instead of rushing through another half-baked idea which would shorten the administration period but cripple the railway for many more years.

● LONG-SUFFERING "customers" of Arriva trains in Yorkshire need no reminder of the company's caring philosophy (the customer is always late) that has left it bereft of drivers and forced it to cancel countless services *(Eyes passim)*.

But they may be interested to note that the philosophy extends to the buses Arriva runs too. When one of its bus drivers was recently robbed at knifepoint, Arriva did the decent thing and docked the stolen £24.93 from his wages.

● PASSENGERS on South Central's 0927 Eastbourne to Victoria service on 29 November were treated to one of the "customer announcements" of the year as the train pulled into Hayward's Heath.

"This is from the man with the refreshment trolley," said a voice over the tannoy. "Unfortunately, one of the wheels has come off his trolley. Customers requiring drinks or light refreshments can find the trolley situated in the coach at the front of the train..." Not so much a customer announcement, more a metaphor, really...

● PASSENGERS who use London Waterloo are reminded daily of Railtrack's incompetence.

When the company ripped out the giant departures board and replaced it with much smaller electronic monitor screens, it was not a huge success.

The monitors have white, pink or yellow letters on a blue background, instead of white on black, and can only be read from close range. The screens are too small to list all the calling points of some trains, so the display may swap jarringly between one page of text and another. Oh – and when the sun shines, no one can read the monitors anyway.

In response to complaints Railtrack has tried to reduce glare by putting material behind the screens and removing mirrors from the shopping emporium on the concourse. It has fixed dark matting beneath screens, painted over glass roof panels and fitted roof blinds. Extra monitor screens have been dotted around the station in the hope that at least one will be readable. Having got rid of its experienced managers, Railtrack had to call in yet another consultant, whose latest ideas for improving visibility are eagerly awaited.

● THE strategic rail authority (SRA) has stopped publishing monthly train statistics, a few months after the *Eye* said the SRA's strategy was all about getting the government off the hook.

Last summer *Eye* 1027 and 1032 described how the SRA was changing the presentation of data to put the best possible gloss on train-delay figures. Now the SRA has admitted it stopped the monthly bulletin because the civil servants at the transport department who now run the SRA deemed it embarrassing to the government.

● THOUGH the *Eye* may have given the impression that Railtrack chief executive Steve Marshall was more interested in his salary and shares than the comfort of passengers, we are pleased to report that he recently bid £550 at a charity ball for a VIP visit to a railway signal box — a prize donated by Railtrack. It was uncharitable of some guests to suggest that he is paid to visit signal boxes anyway and should have done so more often to see how a railway works.

'Dr B. Ching'

Warballs

"Since the tragedy of 11 September, commerce not only in the USA but also in the UK has suffered across the board. Many companies have out of necessity had to make massive cutbacks to continue trading. One such industry in the UK that has seen severe loss of business is that of the automotive industry. In an attempt to boost volume, many of these manufacturers have seen fit to distress-market their products to achieve continuity of production. It would be remiss of us not to bring this to your attention, as in our opinion *there has probably never been a better time* to consider replacing your company vehicles..."

— Junk-fax from Flexilease's Derby office

"Dear clients and friends: The national tragedy of 11 September is foremost in our nation's collective consciousness. At the same time, we must all heed the prudent words of our nation's leaders to continue to do our individual jobs and thereby contribute to the well being of the country as a whole. With this in mind, for our fourth edition, we are pleased to roll out our new firm name and logo. Our new identity is meant to reflect both our history as well as our evolving growth."

— Brochure from US lawyers Cozen O'Connor

"On Tuesday, 11 September – a beautiful, clear, sunny day – I left my New York hotel at 10 to keep an appointment at the Morgan Library, where the previous afternoon I had delivered the British Library's manuscript loans to the Oscar Wilde exhibition... Now, at the end of October, I hear from the Morgan that the city is slowly returning to something like its normal life and the Wilde exhibition is attracting unprecedentedly large numbers of visitors. Sadly, those who lost their lives on 11 September never had the opportunity to see it."

— Sally Brown, in November issue of the British Library's magazine *shelflife*

'Of more significance is our performance since 11 September,' group chairman Frank Eaton told shareholders at the annual general meeting this week (15 Nov). 'We have continued to increase sales by 9 percent without any material increase in our selling costs... We remain fully on course to achieve further sound growth.'"

— Press release from Barratt Homes

"As the global situation heats up, it's easy to look outside of our society/selves and view others as different and even potentially dangerous. But we all know music is the universal language of the heart that transcends cultures and border, yet joins us in a collective experience of oneness through multiplicity. Enjoy these new and exciting releases from E-Music."

— Circular from online retailer E-Music.com

"Just about the only topic for recent discussion among property professionals has been: 'What effect will the attacks on America have on the world situation in general and the UK property market in particular?'"

— *London Property News*

EDUCASHUN NEWS

STUDENTS caught up in a last minute panic over exams and dissertations might like to visit Elizabeth Hall Associates, run by an ex-lecturer at the University of Central England.

Elizabeth Hall offers a service her website (www.elizabethhall.co.uk) coyly calls "academic rescue", which she happily admits means she will research and write students work for them, no questions asked. "I can take the responsibility of writing your dissertation off your shoulders if that is what needs doing," wrote Hall in response to an email from a Private Eye hack posing as a desperate student. "I am ready to commence any work on your behalf... You will need to let me know your deadlines etc, well in advance and send through to me as much material as you have on your chosen study, and I will go from there."

She does demand that clients sign a disclaimer – "I agree to accept any material provided by Elizabeth Hall Associates on the understanding that it is a guidance model only" – but she admits when handing over the form that it "is purely to protect myself... once the work is in your hands, it is your property and you are free to do with it as you wish."

Hall has a sliding scale of fees: for a BA or other first degree it's £35 an hour, MAs come in at £40, while a PhD will set you back at least £45 an hour, plus expenses. She remains determinedly untroubled by the ethics of her own chosen career. "There's nothing new about students cheating – students copy out of books or from other students' essays. Some even sleep with their lecturers."

Letters

Private Eye

A bone to Pickett

Sir,

I read the doctors' replies on MMR (1042) with interest. While it is tempting to respond with a similar diatribe, maybe two points are sufficient, especially in the light of recent events.

Mr Elliman's and Ms Bedford's insistence that their criticism of the research linking MMR and autism is only construed as criticism of Dr Wakefield because he's the only one doing it, is both revealing and incorrect. If they believe that his is the only such research, then they are not very well placed to disagree with it, except through the rather elementary mistake of equating absence of evidence with evidence of absence – whatever happened to the precautionary principle?

As it happens, Dr Wakefield's results are well supported by those from Prof John O'Leary of the Combe Women's Hospital in Dublin, who found both measles and mumps viruses in the gut of 24 out of 25 autistic children whose condition had only been detected post-MMR. Autism has risen nearly ten-fold since MMR was introduced, but of course officially this remains a coincidence.

Secondly, Elliman's and Bedford's assertion that "it would be professional suicide to take a particular stance on an issue for reasons other than the scientific evidence" appears to be diametrically opposed to the truth. Dr Wakefield has just lost his job because his scientific evidence runs counter to the official view, never mind that it might add to the sum of human knowledge or, heaven forfend, be accurate! I doubt that even the authors of the letter would hang on to their jobs for very long if they supported Dr Wakefield...

Best regards,
JAMES PICKETT DSR,

Via e-mail.

Missing the point

Sir,

Doctors Elliman, Bedford and Miller continue to miss the point (Eye 1042). The central issue is, exactly what has damaged a very substantial number of specific named children, who were developing normally before receiving MMR and who are now severely autistic or damaged in other ways?

To date, there have been only two studies of these specific children. The first, by the Committee on Safety of Medicines, noted that it was impossible to prove or refute the suggested association between MMR and autism on the basis of the information available. The second, by Spitzer, Aitken et al, stated (verbatim quote) "the key finding of the survey is the delay between exposure to MMR and the emergence of autistic symptoms, or the delay to definitive diagnosis of an autistic syndrome. The median we report for delay to diagnosis is 2.5 years. That means that the assumptions about delay... in many published articles and safety assessments (of MMR) are invalid".

Messrs Elliman, Bedford and Miller must have read the Spitzer study.

Perhaps they would care to comment?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID THROWER,

Warrington, Cheshire.

Ringing the change

Sir,

It hardly seems worth pointing out, but Peter Jackson directed "The Fellowship of the Ring", not Peter Weir as stated in Books & Bookmen. I wish I had better things to do with my time.

SIMON STAPLETON,

University of Exeter.

Unhealthy state of affairs

Sir,

Re: "Nursing A Grievance" (2 November). As one of the 4 percent of UKCC registrants who voted the present UKCC council into office, I cannot say how much I disagree with the official view of the UKCC expressed through your letters page. The MD article of 19 October was "spot on".

The UKCC has ignored my profession of health visiting for 20 years. There was a flurry of activity by the UKCC around health visiting in the last couple of years prompted by a short period of political favour; Frank Dobson, while health secretary, championed our profession. Two reports on health visiting were produced in two years compared with none in the previous 20.

As a health visitor of 25 years, watching my profession disappear, I am entitled to ask: "What has the UKCC ever done for me or my clients?" I have to answer: "Not a lot."

MARY DALY,

Health Visitor, Harrow.

Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Newport join forces every year to support the appeal to try to make sure a child is forgotten at Christmas time.

Gwent Gazette

A turd runway?

Sir,

Piloti refers to the proposed Terminal 5 as being the largest development ever undertaken in Britain on a greenfield site. As you will recall each time you take off from Heathrow in a westerly direction, you pass over the huge Longford sewage works, which is the planned location for the building.

A brownfield site if ever there was one.

Kind regards,
ROBIN PLATT,

Thatcham, Berks.

The dia-tribes of Israel

Sir,

Why not ask the head of Mossad or even Mr Sharon to be your correspondent on the West Bank and Gaza Strip? This would at least redress the balance after the "Letter From Israel" in your last issue. I've come across hate-filled, fanatical diatribes against Israel over the years, but this takes some beating.

Could your Jerusalem correspondent possibly be a member of Islamic Jihad or Hamas? Or even a buddy of Bin Laden?

Yours in utter disgust,
LEWIS DE FRIES,

Haslemere, Surrey.

● ***No. The writer, as indicated, is an Israeli citizen. Ed.***

Sir,

While accepting that the seemingly heavy-handed behaviour of the Israeli government and security forces is a fair target for your esteemed organ (Letter from Israel, Book of Sharon, Eyes passim), I'd like to think that you'll also present the ideology and activities of the various factions comprising the Palestinian movement in a similar vein.

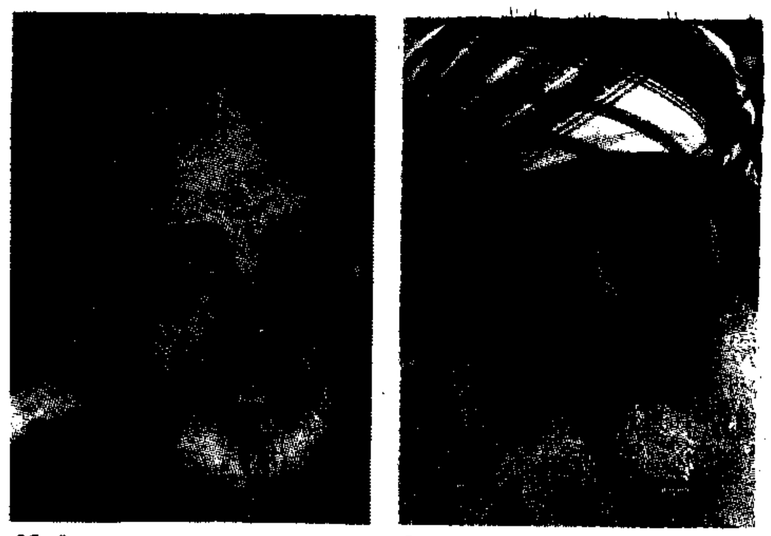
I'm sure you could find plenty of material to amuse and delight us: the manipulation and indoctrination of Palestinian youth from an early age, motivating them to blow themselves up in order to eliminate such obvious military targets as Israeli teenagers frequenting bars and cafes in downtown Jerusalem; President Arafat's "revolving door" policy of the arrest and subsequent release of known terrorists; the stated aims of Hamas, Hizbullah and Islamic Jihad to "liberate" the "whole of Palestine".

Yours,
MICHAEL LOWE,

Via e-mail.

● ***See "Letters From Gaza"*** *(Eyes passim) .* ***Ed.***

Lookalike



Kahn **Connery**

Sir,

I was struck by the resemblance between Ismail Kahn (legendary Iranian-backed leader, who escaped a Taliban jail in 1998) and Sir Sean Connery (who heroically escaped Alcatraz as part of his character preparation for "The Rock" with Nicholas Cage)... Might they be related?

Best regards,
JONATHAN BROWNE,

Japan.

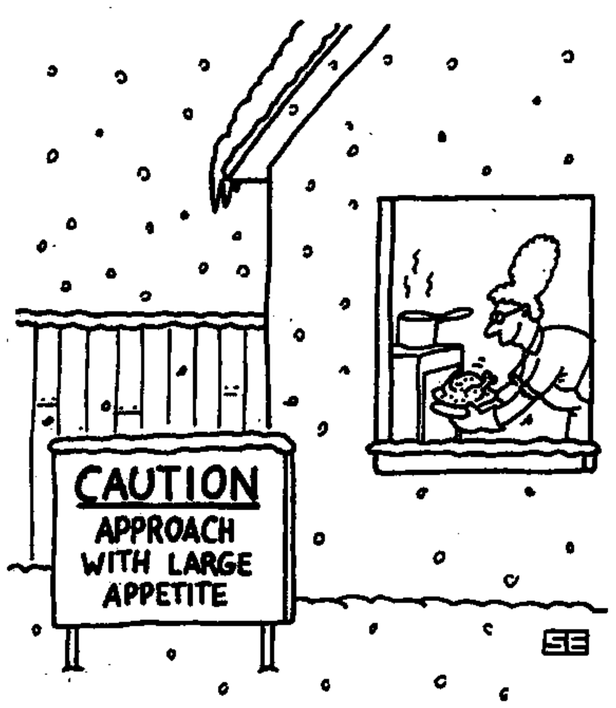
O·B·N

The first time I met Peter Mandelson we started off discussing shirts and finished by talking about the IRA. He's that sort of man. Mention economic downturn, cultural upshift, the war on terrorism, the future of Noraid or the cut of a Gieves & Hawkes suit and the MP for Hartlepool will overflow with opinion. Informed opinion. As Tony Blair's grand vizier, the former Northern Ireland Secretary was one of the prime architects for New Labour, and has been at the centre of British political life for the last 15 years. He is a man who knows Parliament better than Parliament itself.

GQ Magazine introduces its new columnist

Nominated by David Lawrence.

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.



Veiled criticism

Sir,

Ooh, this Afghan campaign's getting rather bitchy, isn't it? Who needs the Taliban when the hacks are so keen to put the knife in?

We're the production company that made both Beneath the Veil and Unholy War. We may well be unwitting lickspittles of the US propaganda machine, but your assertion (Eye 1042) that the latter programme was cynically aimed at the American market is daft. The show was commissioned and fully funded by Channel 4, who have subsequently sold it all over the world. You may see something sinister about loads of "unexplained-fades-to-black" – custom built for those US commercial breaks – I just see an admittedly rather tired old way of indicating the lapse of time.

Anyway, as propagandists for the sinister US war machine we don't seem to be doing a very good job. Who wanted to pinch the producer of Beneath the Veil for his next breast-beating epic? Step forward St Pilge of Bondi – for it was he.

Best wishes,
DAVID HENSHAW,

Hardcash Productions.

Lookalike

Mullah Muhammad Khaksar

Rory McGrath

Sir,

They think it's all over. Well, it is now.
GEOFF MORGAN,

Via e-mail.

Hoax bombs away!

Sir,

Fife council's advice to staff on dealing with telephoned bomb threats (Eye 1042) has worked elsewhere. I recall from my time as a "security checker" the switchboard operator who, when responding to a caller who claimed to have set a bomb, worked down just such a list of questions and obtained the caller's name and address! When questioned by Inspector Knacker the hoaxer said he made the call because his mate had done it "lots of times". Knacker had only to lean the tiniest bit from the vertical to obtain the mate's name and the subsequent successful prosecutions brought to an end a long and irritating run of hoaxes.

Happy Christmas,
BERT HASEMAN,

Dunstable, Beds.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"These things happen. Over a season, y'know, you'll get goals disallowed that are good, you'll get goals that are good disallowed. It happens."
KEVIN KEEGAN, ITV
(Martin Jackson)

"We can all look forward to some exciting grudge matches in the Goodwill Games."
DON SUTTON, TBS (USA)
(Roger Andrews)

"She sadly passed away today, though three of her horses won today to cheer her up."
Racing Correspondent, Radio 5
(Graham Herriott)

"[Ravanelli] was unlucky... or was it just bad luck?"
DES LYNAM, ITV
(R.J. Armstrong)

"It's getting tougher, teams are beating other teams left right and centre."
GLENN HODDLE, Radio 5
(Nigel Allen)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

Letter from **Caracas**

from Our Own Correspondent

IT'S a tough contest on this continent, but we in Venezuela are ahead of the field in bringing back to the centre of Latin American politics those dangerous men in uniform. Exhibit number one: the nut-in-chief, former lieutenant-colonel Hugo Chavez, our once beloved (now loathed) head of state. Always eccentric, Chavez has recently been exploring the outer reaches of bonkers, as his slender grasp on reality dwindles.

Once upon a time he merely irritated us with endless tales of his four-year-old daughter's pet tortoise and the wise words of his beloved late grandmother – broadcast live and at excruciating length on all domestic radio and TV channels. But things began to go seriously off the rails after 11 September. Evidently concluding that US global hegemony was on the edge of collapse, our erstwhile revolutionary hero and champion of the down-trodden renewed his calls for an end to the "unipolar" world order and set off on a meandering tour of 15 countries in four continents, making up his itinerary as he went.

Highlights included a courtesy call on Colonel Gadafy. In Paris he demanded respect for the human rights of Ilich "Carlos the Jackal" Ramirez, the celebrated terrorist and son of our soil. A stop in London began awkwardly when he met the Queen and referred to her as the Queen Mother. Things got worse when he then presented your venerable monarch with a pair of splendid macaws, prompting royal panic and horror, and a couple of diplomatic steps backwards when Hugo, a protocol-free zone, shaped up as if to give her a hug.

Returning in triumph to a cheesed-off nation and seething US embassy, he demanded a welcome-home rally commensurate with his self-appointed status as a towering Third World icon. His supporters stayed away in droves, but the empty streets and half-deserted plaza were transformed in Hugo's befuddled brain into cheering masses. He smiled, waved and threatened to call out 100 million demonstrators to show the "oligarchy" who was boss. No one had the heart to point out that – fond as we are of procreating – Venezuela has a population of just 23 million.

With the price of crude oil – our only export worth mentioning – plummeting as fast as the president's opinion-poll rating, and sticking up for terrorists perhaps something of a diplomatic *faux pas* in the current global climate, a more prudent man might have postponed the revolution. Not Hugo. He unveiled a massive package of decree-laws – on everything from land reform to public notaries – universally interpreted by the private sector as a frontal attack on private property and by most unions as a threat to labour rights. Virtually single-handed he has thus created an opposition alliance supported by both rich and poor, with calls last week for a nationwide general strike and simultaneous protest by business leaders.

Some of his comrades from his days as a military coup-plotter now regret having persuaded him to stand for president. They recall the misgivings they had when he claimed to be a reincarnation of Ezequiel Zamora, a 19th-century general. Or when he acted as a medium for the spirit of independence hero Simon Bolivar. Some in the opposition, meanwhile, plan to activate article 233 of Hugo's own revolutionary constitution, which provides for his removal from office on grounds of insanity.

Before he completely lost the plot, though, our president thought up a clever way to forestall such a manoeuvre: by appointing Adina Bastidas (aka "la Talibana") to the vice-presidency. Adina recently dwelt on the white Anglo-Saxon personage of the US elite and loftily opined that terrorism was a "perverse by-product of Waps [*sic*] domination" of the world, which included the fiendish Bill Gates and his "Microsol" (*sic*) corporation. Granted the constitution only calls for her to take over – in the event of the president's departure – for 30 days, pending fresh elections. But a month of the intellectually-challenged la Talibana could have us screaming for the return of Chavez.

"Mary? Hi. Our computer has selected you from two thousand households to bear the Son of God. Or you could opt for a top-of-the-range Mondeo..."

GOVERNMENT PROMISES 'ONE BILLION MORE' FOR NHS

IN his pre-budget statement the Chancellor today promised one billion more promises about the modernisation of the NHS over the next three years.

"From the moment this Government came to power, we recognised that what was needed was a commitment to delivering billions more empty promises than the previous Tory administration," a beaming Chancellor told cheering Labour backbenchers.

The Chancellor pledged that the extra billion promises would be carefully targeted to the seriously cash-stretched areas of the NHS most at risk of getting onto the front pages. *(Reuters)*

LATE NHS NEWS

THE Government has announced that patients who are forced to wait more than six months for serious operations will now be able to opt out of the NHS by dying.

"They'll be whisked away along a long tunnel towards the light," said Health Secretary Alan Mulburn, "where they'll then be privately seen by St Peter at the Pearly Gates before being transferred onto a comfortable fluffy white cloud where they'll receive their own harp.

"We believe that this partnership with the after life could be the key to easing the strain on our hard-pressed health service." *(Reuters)*

BUPA ASSURES NHS PATIENTS

NHS patients who, under a Government initiative will now be treated in a private hospital, have been assured that there won't be any drop in the level of treatment they will receive.

"Of course we'll be leaving them lying unattended in drafty corridors as we get on with treating our proper full paying patients," promised a senior... *(Cont. p. 94)* *(Reuters)*

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

"At the present time, with what we know about the incident, it doesn't give us cause for any disciplinary action," Superintendent Michael Virgil of the Morris Central School told reporters in Oneonta (New York State). "What these three students were doing was just like kids playing chicken on state route 23, only more violent and a lot bloodier. But the shootings took place off school property, so we don't care. It's not our concern."

Earlier, Captain Kevin Molinari of the Mount Vision Police explained what had happened. "We were notified of this incident by the school nurse, who told us that three teenagers had visited her clinic, with multiple gunshot wounds to their left legs. When we investigated, the boys wouldn't tell us at first where they'd got the injuries. But eventually one of them admitted that they'd been playing truant, had gotten bored, and decided to take part in what they called 'a test of courage,' though anyone else would call it a test of imbecility. In plain terms, this means that one of them stole his father's .22 calibre rifle, and they took it in turns to shoot each other through the leg. They say that they shot each other about three times each, before they realised that the bleeding wouldn't stop, and that what they were doing might be dangerous. That's when they decided they'd better seek medical help. All three are also currently being given rigorous psychiatric treatment. Not that I think it'll be of any use".

Kenneth Stabler, 16, Christopher Ruke, 16, and James Fisher, 17, were all later charged with second-degree assault on each other. *(Daily Star [Oneonta], 27/10/01. Spotter: Rupert Hull)*

—o—

"What amazes me is that the President didn't notice that the money wasn't reaching his account," a Zambian police spokesman told reporters. "Eighty-two million kwacha is a lot of money, and sixteen months is a long time. But the President simply didn't notice that he hadn't been receiving his salary since May 2000."

The policeman was speaking after the arrest of three men, who are suspected of stealing President Frederick Chiluba's pay during a period of sixteen months. "Their scheme was simple, yet cunning. One was a businessman, and the other two work for Barclays Bank in Ndola. The businessman opened an account in the same name as the President, and each month when the salary came into the bank, the employees would simply change the account number and pay it into their friend's account. Then they would share it amongst themselves. The President never asked why he wasn't receiving any money, and the fraud was only discovered because one of the bank employees went on holiday. His replacement queried why the President's account number was being changed, and the scam was uncovered."

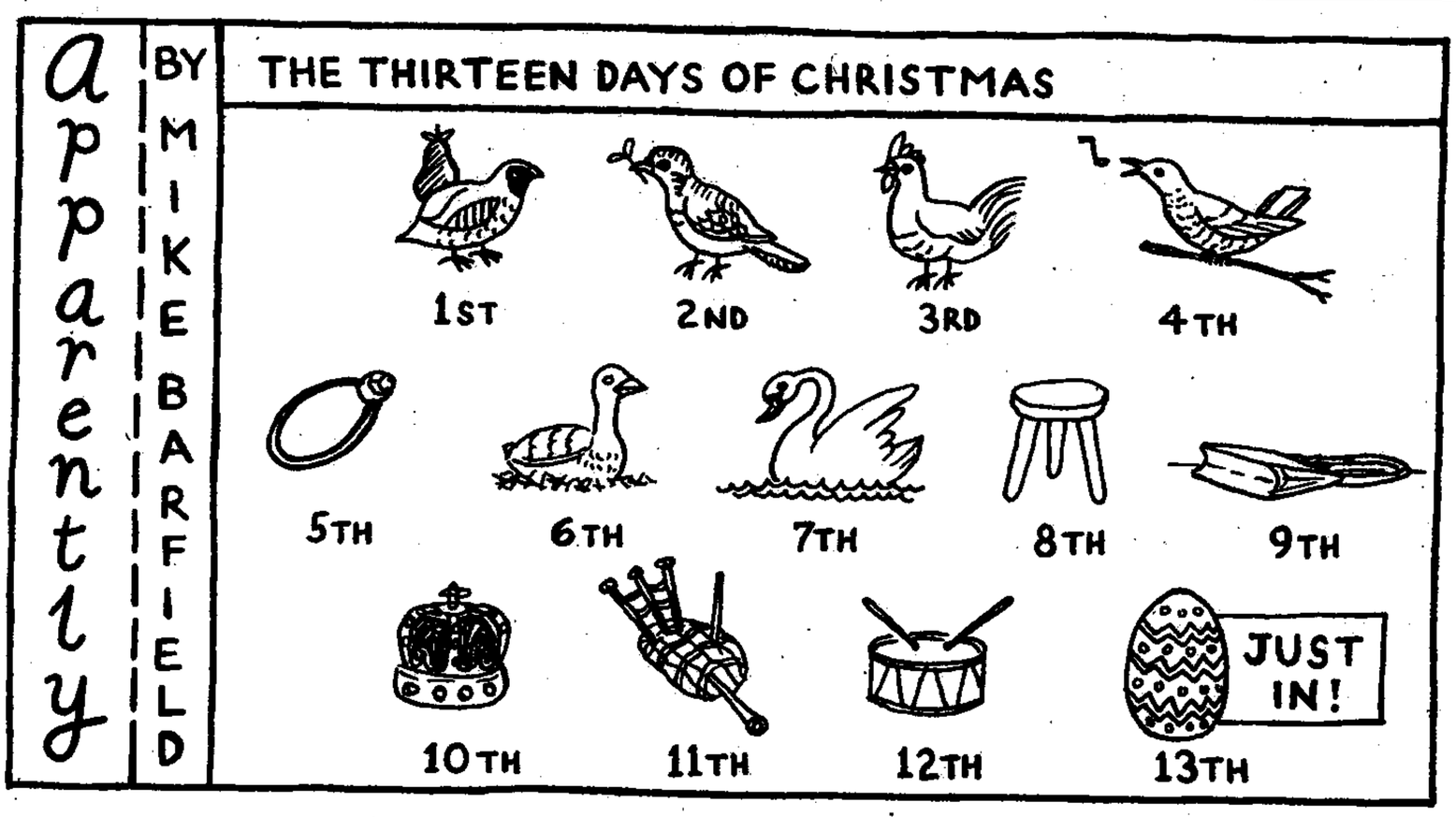
A spokesman for Barclays said that the bank had reimbursed the President's account with the missing eighty-two million kwacha, and had launched an investigation. *(The Post [Zambia], 19/10/01. Spotter: Douglas Ball)*

—o—

"The main problem our dog wardens face is that they're often suspected of being paedophiles," environmental health officer Duncan MacDonald told town councillors in Ventnor. "They have to undertake covert surveillance work, in order to catch people who let their dogs foul the pavement. But that leads to complaints from the public about men who are seen lurking behind bushes and frightening the children. However, when our wardens are in uniform, people realise who they are and clear up after their dogs, so we can't catch anybody red-handed. Therefore, our proposed solution is that the wardens will wear plain clothes while they're hiding,

then slip on a one-piece high-visibility suit as they approach an offending dog-walker to award them a fixed-penalty ticket. And we've told them not to approach children at all, though they will still chase after old ladies, because they're the worst offenders."

But some town councillors were unhappy with this suggested compromise. "This is scaring the life out of elderly ladies" one complained. "They came after me last week, running and shouting, and behaving like muggers. I thought I was being attacked. If you ask me, this is how the Nazis began." (Isle of Wight County Press, 8/11/2001. Spotter: Nick Goodyer, Hong Kong)



The Grauniad

APOLOGY

The Countess of Wessex

IN COMMON with all other papers, we may have given the impression in recent years that the Countess of Wessex, formerly Sophie Rhys-Mogg, was a grasping, snotty Sloane, determined to exploit her Royal connections for her own personal profit.

We now realise that Sophie is a deeply tragic figure who deserves the sympathy of the nation in her time of grief and is furthermore an icon of suffering comparable only to the late Princess Diana.

We apologise profoundly for any distress caused by our earlier articles.

ON OTHER PAGES

Callous Queen snubs dying daughter-in-law **2**

Heartless Andy kills pheasants whilst Sophie nears her end **3**

Charles talks to plants but not to saintly Sophie **5**

"What is an ectopic pregnancy?" Asks Dr Thomas Utterfraud
Answer: About a thousand words by tomorrow. Ed.

BLUNKETT LASHES OUT

by Our Home Affairs Staff **Pat Riot**

MR DAVID BLUNKETT today warned ethnic minorities that they had to embrace "British cultural values" or risk internment under his new anti-terrorist legislation.

When asked to define mainstream British culture he told journalists, "I don't mean all that class-ridden Tory rubbish about British history and stuff like Shakespeare. No, what I am talking about are our quintessentially British institutions such as McDonald's, Starbucks, Rupert Murdoch, Buddy Holly, The Simpsons, Walt Disney, Frasier, Friends, Adidas and Enron Hubbard, the founder of the American Church of Bankrupty."

He continued, "The most important British institution of all is, of course, New Labour and it is vital that potential immigrants have a basic command of English. They must be able to use simple phrases such as 'I agree with everything Mr Blair says' and 'I will vote Labour in the next election'."

SOMEONE DOESN'T MEET THE HAMILTONS

by Our TV Staff **Whohe Theroux**

IT's the media event of the millennium! At last, the long-awaited non-encounter between someone and the infamous Christine and Neil Hamilton has taken place.

Said the amazed C.J. Nargs *(for it was he)*, "I thought everyone had met the Hamiltons, but it seems I am now the odd one out. I am privileged to be the only person in Britain who has not been on television with them."

Continued Nargs, "To be quite honest, I didn't even know who they were. To begin with, I thought they were Richard and Judy."

Nargs has now been given his own BBC1 TV chat show *Late Night Nargs* and his first guests are rumoured to be the infamous Neil and Christine Hamilton.

We Name The Guilty Men Of Omagh

There is no secret about who is to blame for this terrible atrocity. It is the police. The Guardian says: They should all be strung up, it's the only language they understand.

© *Rubbishertrash 2001.*

GRAND DISGUSTING CHRISTMAS QUIZ

A brown envelope full of money will be awarded to the reader who comes up with the best caption to this seasonal religious photograph of two of Britain's best loved naked celebrities.

Closing date 31 December 2001

Prize: £50 in used fivers or Harrods Tie: – You choose

"My dear, you can never be too rich or too Rubenesque. . ."

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hello,

And how gratifying it was to see so many of you at our special Memorial Meditation Service for George Harrison on Sunday. What a moving occasion that was. Not just for those of us who grew up with him, as I did as a young rock star in the 60s – but for everyone whose lives had been touched by this thoughtful charismatic guitar-playing spiritual teacher. As some of you have been kind enough to say, "He was a lot like you, Vicar". But let's not forget that George was part of a group, a band of disciples. And like the four evangelists, the four Beatles spread the good news, didn't they? John, Paul, George and Ringo.

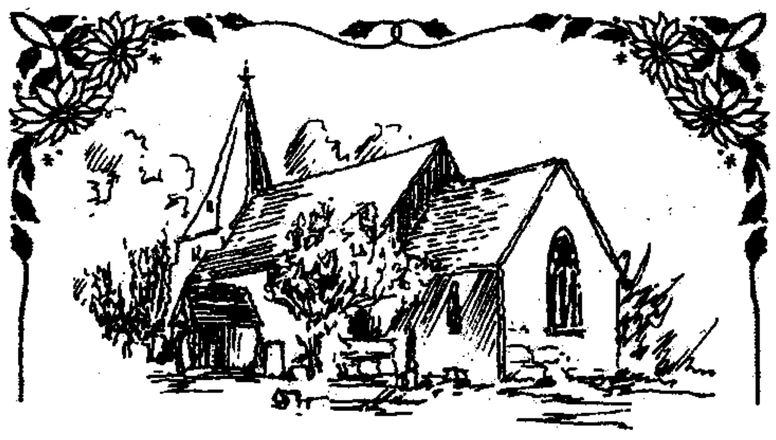
"All you need is love." That was their message. Doesn't that say it all? And isn't that the whole meaning of Christmas? That's why the choir will be singing this great anthem at Midnight Mass and I'll be bringing my guitar to strum along in the background – just like George! You have been warned!

But while we're remembering all the good things that George taught us, let's not forget that sometimes George got it wrong. "Make love, not war" is fair enough in peacetime. But when you're faced with the real world and the real evil of Bin Laden or Saddam Hussein (or Mrs Filkin!) it is to another George that we must turn for enlightenment – The Reverend George Dubya Bush of the Church of the Latter Day Morons. And *his* message is "Let's kick ass" – and isn't that too the whole point of Christmas?

A Very Hare Krishna to all of you!

Tony

The Vicar does his Christmas shopping. And guess what *he* wants for Christmas? "A dead Bin Laden!" Let's all pray for that. A.C.



St Albion's Primary School

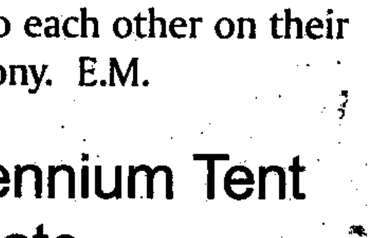
Mrs Morris Writes:

It was marvellous to see the Vicar taking such a personal interest in the school by dropping in to have his photo taken last week. He made an excellent speech about how important it was to get computers into the classroom to do all the boring old stuff that teachers used to do. Like teaching and all that sort of thing. Pupils of the future, he said, could learn directly from computers, leaving teachers free to get on with the really important job of looking for better paid employment! The Vicar's speech went down very well with the staff who all walked out in appreciation, but it was an even bigger success with the pupils who paid close attention to every word that they were text-messaging to each other on their mobiles! Great stuff, Tony. E.M.

Millennium Tent Update

At last we have some really good news about the Millennium Tent! A local public relations firm, the Liza Russ Partnership, has agreed, in return for a token fee of £340,000, to "improve the image" of the tent, prior to its sale, we hope, very early in the New Year! In the meantime, would parishioners kindly refrain from depositing unwanted fridges on top of what is left of the tent.

WOMEN'S GROUPS



Mrs Cherie Booth continued with her weekly talks. Last Monday the subject was "Violence In The Home". As usual, it was very well attended and there was a lively question-and-answer session over coffee. The Vicar made a brief appearance at this point and asked Mrs Booth if it was not the case that women could be just as bullying as men. She told him to "shut up and sit down", which he wisely agreed to do amidst much laughter!

After a vote of thanks proposed by Mrs Jowell and seconded by everyone in the room, there was a collection in aid of The Kabul Association of Women Lawyers (Northern Alliance Branch). A.C.

Parish Postbag

Dear Sir,

Parishioners may like to know that last Thursday I received a very odd call from a woman purporting to be the Vicar's wife, tellling me that I had to give her son help with his homework. Apparently, the young man was due to appear in a debate at his school Our Lady of the League Tables, proposing the motion that "This house believes in the nuclear deterrent". Could I please submit a 3000-word briefing paper on this by 9 o'clock the following morning, with key points highlighted in yellow marker. When I said that I did not regard this as part of my duties as the St Albion's Civil Defence Co-ordinator (voluntary and unpaid), the lady concerned became abusive and

Yours faithfully,
Lt Col A. Penpusher,
The Old Bunker, Somewhere at a secret location in the parish

The editor reserves the right to shorten all letters under new anti-terrorist measures introduced by Mr Blunkett of the Neighbourhood Watch

Forthcoming Talks

We are very lucky that our former churchwarden Mr Mandelson has agreed to give a ticket-only talk, sponsored by the BP Service Station, on his recent trip to Hong Kong. He has promised us some very unusual slides of the nightlife in the famous "Pink Light" district of Wan Sum!

Valete

■ Goodbye to Mrs Filkin who was a loyal secretary at the PCC whose job was to check over the accounts and expenses and make sure there were no discrepancies. As you probably all know, Mrs Filkin has been under a lot of strain recently. As a result, she began to make a series of unfounded accusations against distinguished members of the PCC, such as Mr Mandelson, Mr Robinson, Mr Vaz and Dr Reid.

Her claims exhibited all the symptoms of paranoia and, needless to say, there was no element of truth in any of her wild assertions about sleaze and corruption.

Mrs Filkin has now decided to be sacked and we wish her well in her retirement. We all hope she seeks treatment for her serious mental problems – talking of which, poor Mr Marsden, it seems, is similarly afflicted and has started hallucinating. He imagines that members of the PCC physically attacked him after bellringing on Thursday. Mr Marsden would do well to seek professional help before someone goes round and beats him up – as they would be fully entitled to do, given his recent behaviour. T.B.

★ St Albion Parish News, Book Four. Now on sale – £4.99 ★

POLLY FILLER

Another open letter to Kate Winslet

DEAR KATE – Happy Christmas to you and little Mia! If ever there was a mother and child who deserve our sympathy at Christmas, it's you! Because, guess what, all the men who run the media have decided to brand you a slapper, Kate, just because you dumped your boring husband and went off with someone more famous.

Well, excuse me, isn't that what we women have been fighting for for the past 100 years? The right to choose someone more interesting?

Kate – I salute you. You are a wonderful role model for working women everywhere, a feminist icon for the twenty-first century, and you are looking really thin and blonde as well. What more could one ask?

Let's have no tears shed for dull Jim looking after the baby, changing the nappies and staying up all night. Welcome to motherhood, Jim! No, let's hear it for the svelte, in control, up-front, sassy überchick who knows exactly what she wants and how to get it – ie, an alpha male with money, fame, Oscars and the power to cast you in films. Clever girl, Katie!

SO, that's a message to all you men, including you, the useless Simon, as you sit watching sumo hamsters from Okinawa on the Granada Sad Sport Channel whilst the nanny Kirsten complains about taking Charlie to see Harry Potter for the seventh time.

Either get successful, rich and famous or start checking out the M&S "Singles" range of meals for one. Because, for low achievers like you, Dump City is only just around the corner.

Good luck Kate, and if Sam's next movie is a bummer, you know what to do. The women of Britain are right behind you. Happy Christmas, sister!

Polly

Next week: My Ectopic Pregnancy. Hell – Sophie's not the only one, you know!

■ The ooji booji banners on Llandudno's arse

Photo caption, The Pioneer

19/11/2001 7.30pm
JOHN HOLT AND THE ROYAL PHILHARMONIC CONCERT ORCHESTRA
Venue: THE NIA ACADEMY £30.00 - £40.00 (plus booing fee)

Birmingham Arts listing

*"Okay, okay – **now** I believe in global warming"*

KNACKER WELCOMES BLUNKETT REFORMS

by Our Crime Staff **Conrad Black-Maria** and **W.P.C. Handcuff**

INSPECTOR "Knacker of the Yard" Knacker gave a cautious welcome today to the proposal by Home Secretary David Blunkett that thousands of civilians should be recruited to assist the police in their work.

Said Knacker, "I am sure that these Community Support Wardens will be able to perform a vital task in freeing up the professional police service to do the job the public expects."

"As we see it, the wardens will be empowered to carry out a full range of minor duties which currently occupy too much of the time of the average policeman and policewoman. I refer to such petty and timewasting requirements as tracking down and apprehending dangerous criminals.

Crack Down

"This will allow the bobby on the beat to concentrate his or her attention on the core role of the police service, ie driving pointlessly around the M25 at 120 mph, torturing innocent householders and shooting people in their beds."

RICH OLD ROCKERS NEVER DIE.....
I'VE GOT THOSE MY LAST ALBUM DIDN'T MAKE THE CHARTS BLUES
RECORDING
YOU OD'd ON SANATOGEN AGAIN!
YOU MAY NOT WANT TO SLEEP WITH ME! BUT YOUR MOTHER MIGHT!
MAN! I'M REALLY HIGH AT LAST!
SAGA WORLD TOUR
I'M YOUR MOST LOYAL FAN!

The Daily Hurleygraph

Britain's biggest-selling quality daily

Friday, December 14, 2001

Liz Hits Back

'It Was An Exclusive Relationship'

BY OUR ENTIRE STAFF

ACTRESS Liz Hurley last night denied that her relationship with the Daily Telegraph was not "a special, one-to-one, caring, loving, and mutually supportive affair".

Ms Hurley was speaking out after suggestions had been made by former lover Charles Moore that she would "go with *any* newspaper in town".

Said Mr Moore, "Liz was free to appear in the Daily Mail or the

Sun or the Times and likewise I was within my rights to have a fling with Kate Winslet or continue with my long-standing crush on Jemima Khan."

Friends of Liz Hurley were however outraged by this ungentlemanly behaviour.

Bing in the Oven

"Charles Moore or Charles Osamoore, as we call him," said one furious supporter, "is a complete rat who has no morals."

Mr Moore denied this. "I accept my responsibilities," he announced, "and when Liz has the baby I will do the decent thing and put her on the front page."

Steve Bing is very rich.

Letters to the Editor

The Death of George Harrison MBE

SIR – I was appalled to see you devoting 38 pages of your once-great newspaper to the death of George Harrison. How out-of-touch can you get? Surely your readers deserved at least 80 pages on the passing of one of the world's greatest musicians and spiritual leaders?

Sir Harry Krishna
Dunmeditatin, Berks

SIR – I am sure that many Telegraph readers will have been as shocked as I was by the news that the late George Harrison had been cremated in a Hindu-style ceremony and his ashes mingled with the Holy river of the Ganga. Surely Mr Blair should have stepped in to insist that there should have been a full State Funeral for one of the greatest Englishmen who ever lived. The people of Britain have thus been cruelly denied the opportunity to hear the choir of Westminster Abbey singing such immortal compositions as "Taxman", "Something" and "Something Else".

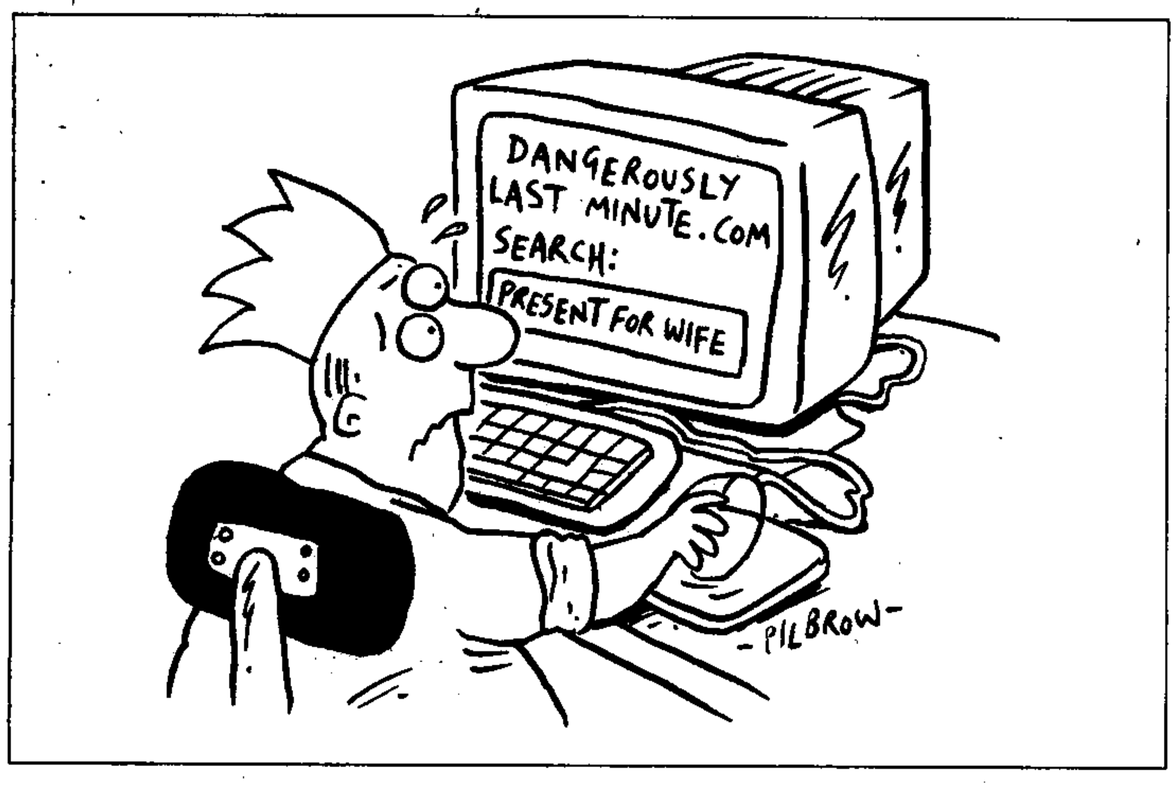
Lord Krishna of Hari
Chantings, Glos

SIR – To many of us who grew up in the Sixties, the figure of J.R. Hartley was the background to our lives. Who of us can ever forget the first time we heard him asking for his new book "Fly Fishing" in the second-hand bookshop? From then on he was a living icon to a whole generation. We dressed like him, we spoke like him and we could all recite by heart the words of his immortal TV commercial "We All Live In The Yellow Pages". Surely the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square has now got an obvious candidate to stand alongside Havelock, Napier and Nelson Mandela.

Chris Na
The Old Riverbank, St Ickleback, Dorset

SIR – Alas your 16-page obituary of the late George Harrison was disfigured by many historical and technical errors. The most glaring of these was your obituarist's claim that Harrison's harmonic modulations in the opening bars of "My Guitar Gently Weeps" were heavily influenced by the 12-bar bridge passage in the middle of the 1928 classic Potato Pickin' Momma Blues recorded by Alabama legend Blind Lemon Shandy Levine in 1936. As Harrison himself made clear in his famous interview with me for the Hamburg magazine *Blaues und Blauemenschen* (Blues and Bluesmen) in 1973, the original B♭ 7th to E♭ 7th progression was given to him by his Quarry Bank schoolfriend Sir George Harrison Birtwhistle (as he later became) in 1959. If anyone is interested in further musicological data on Harrison's early influences, I refer them to my website www.dullbore.com

Jan Arak
Den Haag, Nederlands



ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK

NO. 94
SIR IAN McKELLEN

Would you describe yourself as a spoon-lover?

Of course. It isn't only straight people who like spoons, you know. That's the mistake you lot in the media are always making. Gay people can love spoons quite as much as anyone else.

If I may just change the subject, are there any particular types of spoon which you prefer?

Look, I just said that I like the same sort of spoons as anyone else. What are you expecting me to say, that I only like 'pink spoons', or 'bent spoons'? You people are all the same, trying to force us back into the ghetto.

Can I change the subject again? In your childhood, was yours a happy home with plenty of spoons in it?

There you go again. It's the old unhappy childhood, spoon deprivation equals homosexual theory. It's nonsense. There were as many spoons in our household as any other.

Sir Ian, can I come to your new film, which is why you've agreed to do this interview? Do spoons feature at all in the film?

Yes, I play the wizard Gandalf, an intensely taxing role which makes huge demands on the actor. I am really the character around whom the whole story revolves. It's a mythic journey about cosmic redemption...

But are there any spoons, Sir Ian?

Really, to drag in something as trivial as spoons betrays an unconscious but entirely typical homophobia which is almost endemic in British society, from Tony Blair downwards.

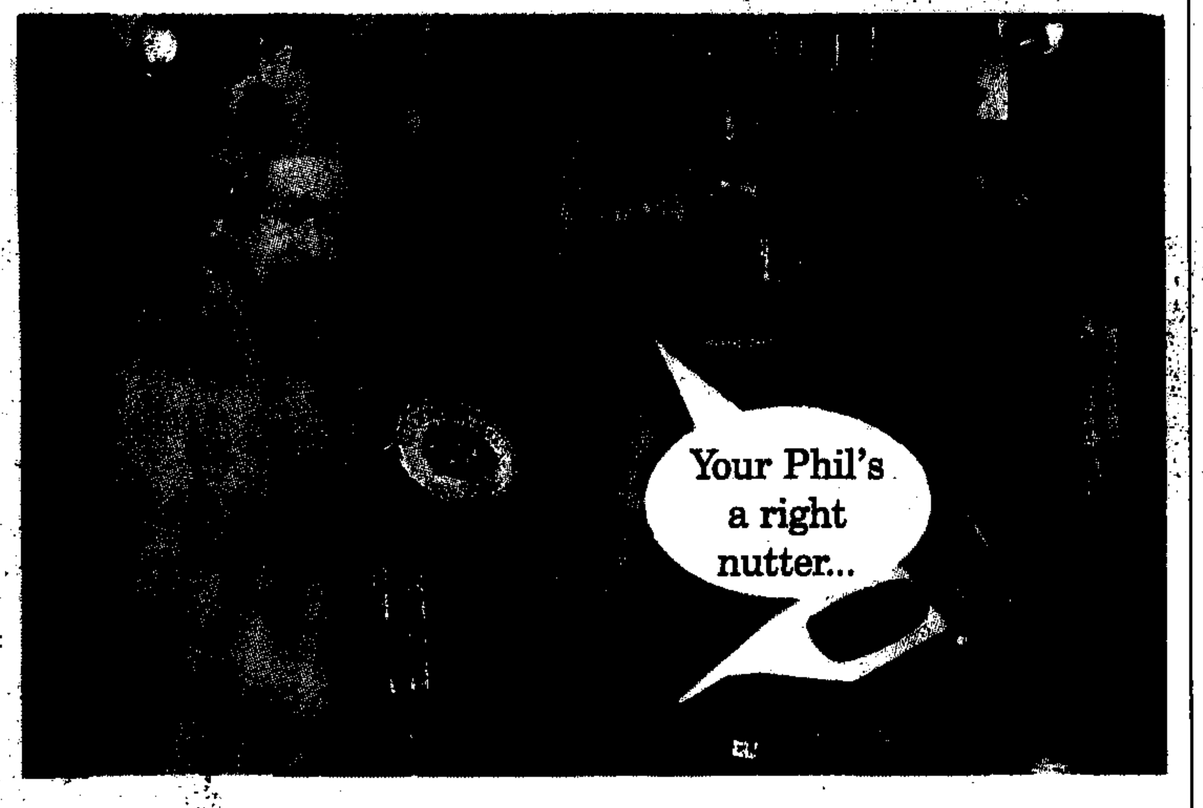
Has anything amusing ever happened to you in connection with a spoon?

Oddly enough, Noel Coward had a very funny story about Terry Rattigan and a soup spoon...

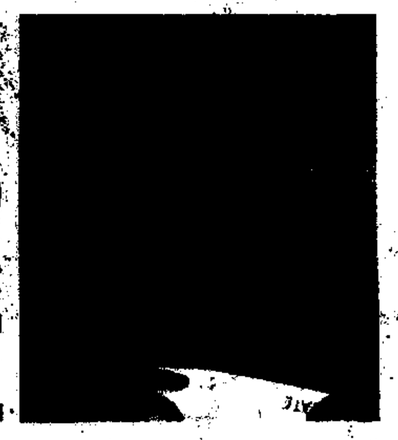
You're meant to say 'no'.

NEXT WEEK: Lord Haskins – "Me and My Mousemat".

"Every year we give them a Christmas tree. Every year they give us..."



MILLIONS PAID FOR NEW TURNER MASTERPIECE



by Our Art Critic **Richard Dormant**

THE art world was rocked to its foundations last night as an amazing picture was bought for the nation.

The famous "Madonna and cheque" is the work of a group of PR men. It depicts Madonna, the celebrated pop artist, cradling an enormous cheque.

Originally experts thought the picture was a fake, but now extensive tests have shown it to be completely bogus.

Motherfucker and child

"It's very exciting," says director of the Tat Gallery Sir Nicholas Arsota, "what the Madonna in the picture is saying to us is, 'Motherfucker bollocks shit art money er buy my records goodnight'."

J.W.M. Turner is turning in his grave.

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam
David Astor
Owner of the Observer
Newspaper

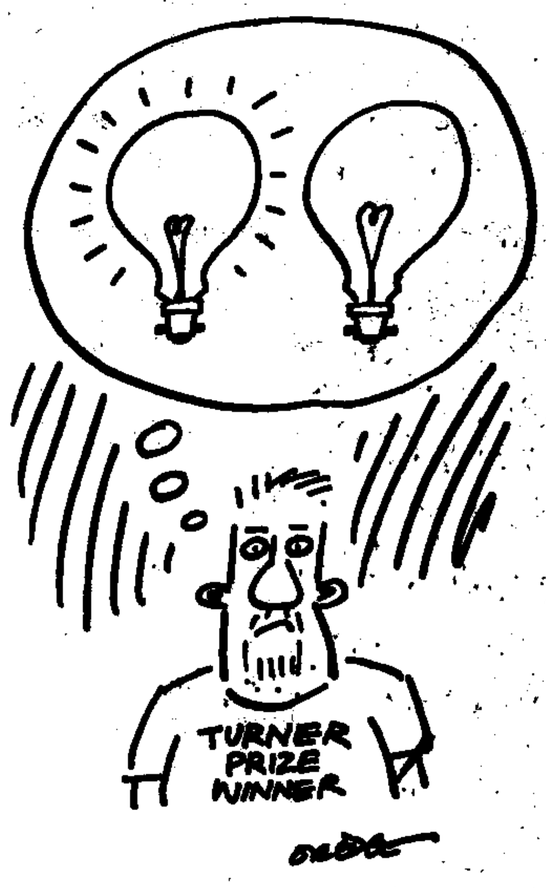
So. Farewell
Then.
David Astor.

Famous owner
Of the Observer.

Your death
Made headlines.

But only
In the
Observer.

E.J. Thribb (17½)



Carpenter nailed in the head, but no brain damage

Daily Nation, SA

Whispers

Our sensational new celebrity column that dishes the dirt on celebrities...

PSSST! WHICH red-top newspaper, whose editor's name sounds suspiciously like 'moron', has for over a year been running a column called 'Wicked Whispers', peddling second-rate anonymous celebrity tat...?

PSSST! WHICH pisspoor editor of a newspaper that rhymes with 'snail' is now publishing the exact same column and trying to pass it off to his readers as something new...?

PSSST! IF this certain pisspoor editor thought nobody would notice this, how psss-t must he have been?"

PSSST! THAT'S enough 'Wicked Whispers'. Ed.

ROY of ENGLAND

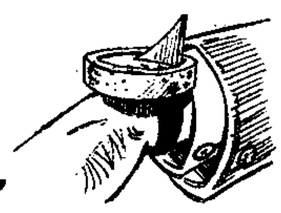
THE WORLD CUP DRAW HAS BEEN MADE
GROUP F
ARGENTINA
ENGLAND
SWEDEN
NIGERIA
YOU MUST ADMIT, IT'S A TOUGH DRAW FOR YOUR TEAM
♪ FOOTBALL'S ♪ COMING HOME AFTER ♪ 3 GAMES ♪
YES, BUT AT LEAST WE'VE GOT ENGLAND IN OUR GROUP
IT'S A TERRIBLE DRAW. IT'S UNFAIR TO US
YOU SEE ENGLAND ARE GOING TO WINGE!
IT REALLY IS DOG EAT DOG ISN'T IT?
IT IS IN KOREA
NEXT WEEK: WILL ROY EAT ROVER?

Gnome's Xmas

Gnomes Past

THE ELIZABETHAN SUNDIAL WRISTWATCH

Based on an original in Hampton Court, this amazing facsimile timepiece takes you back to an era when time moved more slowly. A world of lutes, nosegays and quills. All at the thoroughly modern price of £79.99.

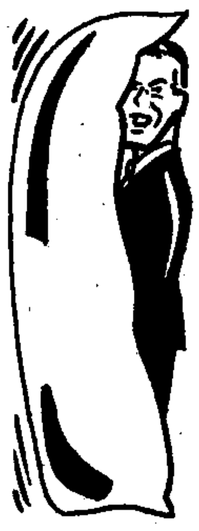


Strap colours: Cilla Black, Chubby Brown, Will Self.

As worn by Sir Walter Raleigh!

No more bumps and bruises in the street, thanks to

The Personal AIRBAG 300Z



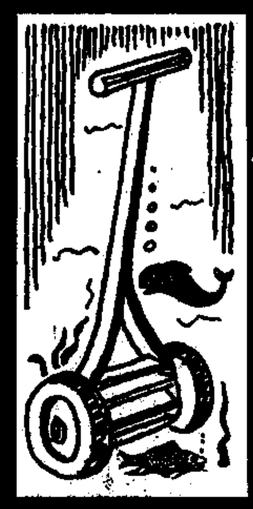
DEVISED by NASA scientists for use on moonwalks, these new personal airbags are a must for the busy man in the street. The Airbag 300Z automatically inflates when contact is made with another pedestrian, lamp-post or tree. *Whoosh! And you're safe!*

£39.99 ***Plays theme tune from TV's Walking With Beasts***

Treasure Trove!

Exclusive to Gnome Mart catalogue subscribers - a unique chance to purchase a piece of history!

IN 1875, the HMS *Bagus* sailed from Plymouth with a priceless shipment of lawnmowers. She sank tragically off the coast of Madeirpur, where her cargo remained perfectly preserved for the next 125 years.



Now these priceless Victorian artefacts have been salvaged from the deep and can be yours for an incredible £3,982 (per lawnmower)

New from the Emerald Isle!!!

The Line-Dancing Worms of Sligo

These incredible worms really do line-dance!! Just play your favourite Irish jig and – begorrah! – watch these Michael Flatleys of the worm world go through their paces!

25p per dozen worms

WARNING: Gnome Xmas Mart cannot be responsible for postal delays resulting in worm-fatigue or mortality.

Say goodbye to slippery cutlery embarrassment with

CUTL-O-GRIP

Made by the Swedish rubber technologists at Eriksonn™, these ingenious hand-moulded grips will fit all your knives, forks and spoons – guaranteeing no more red faces when you're eating your favourite meal.

Set of 20: 35p

Colours: Conrad Black, Gordon Brown, Michael White, Simon Heffer

---

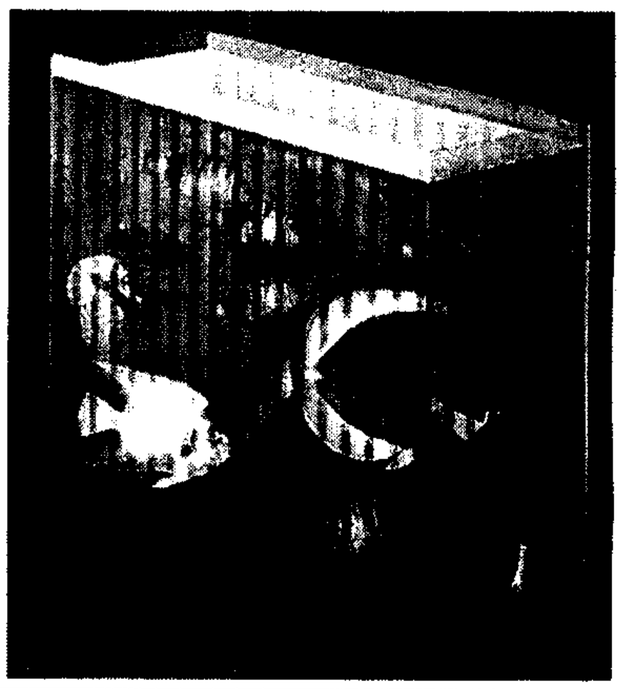
FISH LOVERS!

DON'T MISS

THE AQUARAD™

TURN your boring old radiators into a submarine paradise for your fish.

These incredible see-thru fibreglass radiators provide the perfect habitat for your favourite Angel Fish, Guppies and Koi Carp!



● Says The Blue Planet's DAVID ATTENBOROUGH: "I have an Aquarad in every room. My fish love it and so do I!"

£377 per rad *(fish extra)*

Maximum temperature: LUKEWARM

Cyclists!

100 Picturesque Pavement Routes

At last – the ultimate guide for the discerning cyclist who enjoys using London's beautiful pavements rather than the busy and dangerous roads.

★ Routes include Oxford Street, Kings Road, The Strand, etc. Fully illustrated, with introduction by Stephen Norris.

£15.99

● Plays Charlotte Church singing "You'll Never Walk Alone"

DOG LOVERS!!

Keep in touch with your dog the modern way with

FIDOTEXT

(exclusive to Voda-Bone™)

Attaches to any dog collar, allowing you to contact Fido without leaving your chair.

Sample messages include: WLKIES, GD BOY, FTCH NSPAPER, GT SLIPPAS.

Only £399.99
(plus £30 per month rental)

Plays theme tune from Rolf's Animal Hospital

The Lucky Beard of Taliban!!

FOR hundreds of years the cave-dwelling herdsmen of the Hindu Kush have believed in the magic powers of the "Taliban Beard". Crafted by traditional "Beard-weavers" from the hair of cashmere goats, this silky facial appurtenance protects the wearer from ill-fortune by making him invisible!

Now you too can share the good fortune of this centuries-old holistic charm.

25p per pack of six Colours: Black

Gnomes Past

Eat fish 'n' chips the old-fashioned way – wrapped in a genuine period newspaper!!!

■ NOW YOU can transport yourself back to grandma's day with our collection of historic newspapers.

When you pick up your fish 'n' chips you will be the envy of your fellow customers as you say, "Wrap them up in this copy of the News of the World dated 3 June 1953, please squire!"

Set of 10 newspapers £512.25
(plus complementary salt 'n' vinegar sachet £10)

Say goodbye to shiny new foreign coin misery with

EURO-DULL

★ ***DON'T let your neighbours think you've only just joined the Euro. Just spray it on and – ooh la la!/Mein Gott!/ Mama Mia! – it will look like you've been using the new single currency for years!***

CFC-free, ozone-friendly.

Only £13.99

(Plays Beethoven's Ode to Joy)

Mail Mart

Terrify your friends this Xmas with

THE

David Blunkett Horror Mask

(Comes complete with beard)

HOURS of fun when loved ones think they are going to be locked up for terrorism or religious hatred!

■ PLUS life-like blow-up "Lucy The Dog" for added realism.

99p (+22p for dog)

Gnomes Past

VIKING MOBILE PHONE COVER

Brr-Brr!

Modelled on the 7th Century original in the British Museum, this stone-carved style mobile phone cover will take you back in time to a noble age of warrior princes.

[redacted]

Colours: Ian Paisley, Rabbi Blue, David Yelland.

The Gnome Outpouring-Of-Grief Kit

ARE YOU overwhelmed with emotion every time a much-loved celebrity passes on? Now you can react instantly with this complete package of grief-related items.

Kit Includes: ● ***bunch of flowers*** ● ***note saying "We will never forget you"*** ● ***black armband*** ● ***candle*** ● ***tape of 2-minute silence*** ● ***box of Kleenex.***

[redacted]

Drink Fans!

Take the strain out of sucking with

DYNO-STRAW

Thanks to this miracle break-through from Swiss eco-technologists at L'Institut de Strores, this hydroelectric-powered automatic straw delivers your favourite drink straight to your mouth, with no effort required!

Colours: Red Rum, Grey Gowrie, Andreas Whittam-Smith.

Only £1864 each ***(fully re-usable)***

AUTOBATH

Bath Lovers! The world's first fully programmable computer bath!

Say goodbye to tap-turning-and-overflow-worry misery! No more "Ouch – bath's too hot!" or "Brrr – bath's too cold!" Simply program Autobath with your desired water depth and temperature and let the computer do the rest.

Additional features: ● **pre-set timer for regular bathers** ● **fast-fill/slow-fill mechanism** ● **self-emptying facility** ● **hot air drying function** ● **Pentium 2000 microchip.** *COLOURS: Craig Brown, Simon Grey, Dame Judi Dench.* **£278,342.79** (plus p&p)

Parents! *Say goodbye to fractious kiddie car journeys with the*

BOUNCY CAR-STLE

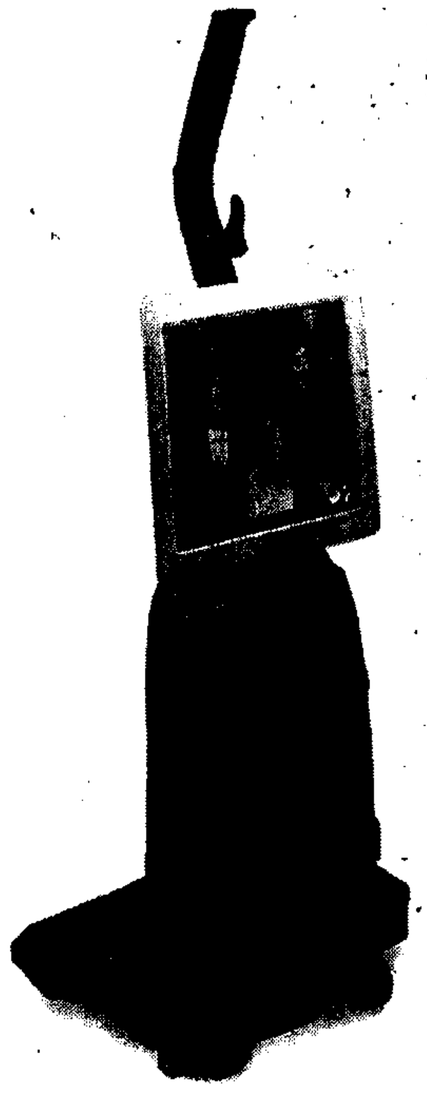
This all-in-one car 'n' bouncy castle has proved a favourite with New Zealand families for years! And now at last Mum and Dad can relax in the front whilst the kiddies have the time of their lives in the back!

Choose from these exciting models: Windsor Castle, Hogwarts Castle, Barbara Castle. **Price: £25,799 (number plates and road tax extra)**

[redacted]

Housewives' Choice

HOOV-O-TEL



NO NEED to miss even a minute of your favourite daytime television viewing, thanks to "Hoov-o-Tel".

Developed by top Canadian scientists, the Hoov-o-Tel can receive 500 of the world's top channels.

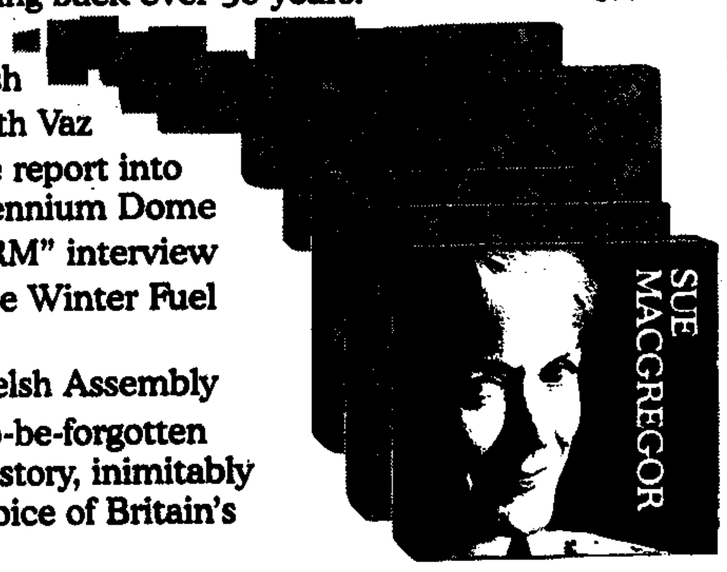
Just plug in and – hey presto! – it's Richard and Judy while you hoover up the dirt!

£7275.99p

Relive history through the unique SUE MACGREGOR COLLECTION!!

(now on 150 boxed CDs)

All the Queen of Today's greatest interviews going back over 50 years.



Relive:

- The Hatfield train crash
- The resignation of Keith Vaz
- The Select Committee report into the financing of the Millennium Dome
- The great "Lamont-ERM" interview
- The introduction of the Winter Fuel Allowance
- The opening of the Welsh Assembly

and many more never-to-be-forgotten milestones in our island story, inimitably recalled by the golden voice of Britain's best-loved broadcaster!!

Special Introductory offer: £3,500 for the full set, plus bonus CD of weather and sport 1997-1999.

DOOR LOVERS!

Christmas Novelty **THE 'DOOR HANDEL'**

Turn it on and – tra-la-la – it plays your favourite Handel piece!

● *Choices include: Hallelujah Chorus (front door); Water Music (bathroom/WC); Entrance of the Queen of Sheba (bedroom).*

Easy to fix *(240-volt battery not supplied)*

£75.00 *(set of three)*

[redacted]

THE ULTRA SMART COLLAPSIBLE CAR

Made in Japan, this revolution in foldaway automotive technology is now available for the first time in the UK. This portable car folds easily into the size of a briefcase and can be carried on bus, train or plane. Yet it expands into an 8-seater people carrier! Watch fellow commuters look with envy as you drive away, leaving them behind at the station!

£2 million

'MY FINAL DEMAND' SHARON WARNS ARAFAT

by Our Middle East Staff **R. McGeddon**

ISRAEL's hard-line premier Mr Ariel Sharon today gave an ultimatum to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

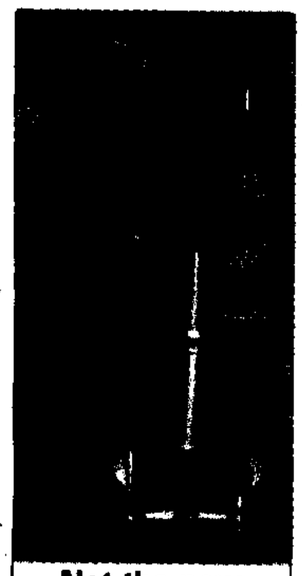
"We will not kill you personally," said Mr Sharron, "provided that you accept two conditions.

"Firstly, you must send your policemen to arrest every terrorist in the Occupied Territories.

"Two, you must not complain when we send helicopters to blow up all your police stations and kill all your policemen."

Mr Arafat promptly agreed to all the Israeli demands. *(Reuters)*

"Of course we're glad you're home for Christmas, but I think your mother was hoping for something other than your dirty washing"



Not the new invention

REVOLUTIONARY NEW MEANS OF TRANSPORT LAUNCHED

by Our Invention Staff **Ginger Rogers and Keith Segway**

AN amazing new "human transporter" designed to carry people from their homes to their place of work was unveiled last night by inventor Mr George Stephenson.

Called "a train", the device runs on wheels along a track and is powered by a motor.

Its designers claim it can travel at speeds of up to 30mph, could be used by millions of commuters and could revolutionise Britain's ailing transport system.

But the Transport Secretary Mr Stephen Byers was unconvinced. "This is never going to work," he said. "It's a nice idea but the reality is that this train is going nowhere."

The 7.15 to Waterloo has been cancelled.

Enjoy the spirit of Christmas with Gnome-Tel's compilation of seasonal favourites

THE GREATEST GANGSTA RAP CHRISTMAS ALBUM EVER

So Solid Crew "Blown Away In A Manger"

Eminem "I Saw Mummy Being Beaten Up By Santa Claus"

Puff Daddy "The Holly And The Uzi"

Snoop Dog "Joyriding To The World"

Gangsta Boo "I Saw Three Shipments of Crack Cocaine"

Ghostface Killah "Deck The Whores"

(That's enough seasonal music. Ed.)

The Eye's All-purpose Cut-Out-'n'-Send Corporate Christmas Card

On the 12th day of Xmas my true love sent to me...

12 Accountants Accounting!

11 Marketeers A-marketing!

10 Typists A-typing!

9 Directors Drumming (up business!)

8 Sales Teams Selling!

7 Planners Planning!

6 Profit Centres Performing!

5 MOBILE (phone) RINGS!

4 Calling Clients!

3 French Co-partners!

2 Intranet Terminals!

And a new office in Milton Keynes which we're moving into on Jan 13th!

Happy Christmas
From All Of Us At

INSERT NAME HERE _____

Terry And The Team

DIARY

TRIBUTES TO GEORGE HARRISON

JANET STREET-PORTER: Mega mop-top or what? George always was and always bloody will be my absolute fave Beatle, after John and Paul and Ringo. He was a total one-off. He was without doubt the only Beatle whose name began with a G, and he thought of growing a beard way, way before the others. And those mega-triff songs of his will always stay in my mind, not that I can think of one at the moment. Talk about groovebags! Octopus's Garden was one of his, I'm pretty bloody definite. And so was I Can't Get No Satisfaction and My Way. And didn't he do *Hey Mr Tambourine Man*? Blimey, let's groove, gang! They're Total Def 11 Classix. Hey, let's twist and shout! Wooh!

YOKO ONO: There will never be another George Harrison. How could I forget him? I was married to him for a very long time, and we were always very, very happy together, creating all those lovely songs I wrote with him. Please, I say this to all our fans, don't feel sorry for me now that George has passed on. For he will live in my heart forever, and I own total world rights to his songs. Peel an apricot. Throw it in the air. Here comes the sun. Now the sun has fallen on the ground. It has made a mess. Leave it where it is. Or your hands will become very sticky.

LADY THATCHER: George Harrison was a Briton, my goodness he was, a tough and resolute Briton through and through. If you'll just let me finish. Believe me, he was utterly DETERMINED that the Falkland Islands should remain British, and my goodness he was a doughty fighter in the battle against inflation. Or so I believe. If you'll just let me go on. Unlike other Beatles I could name, I have every reason to believe George stuck with me through thick and thin, urging me never to forfeit the reins of power. No Whining Willie he! He also wrote some tremendous tunes for the Party. My Sweet Lord was his tribute to Lord Young of Graffham. Then there was his magnificent attack on Mr Scargill and his men: if you are not going to do the jobs you are paid for, he seems to be saying, then "I Me Mine".

RAY CONNOLLY: I met George Harrison in the autumn of 1966 and this most generous of friends allowed me to talk to him for well over five minutes, possibly almost six.

"Hello, George!" I said, "I'm Ray Connolly!".

"Hi, Ray!" he said. It was as if we had known each other for years. I was never to meet him again, but in that short time, we forged a firm friendship that I was able to spread over the next thirty-three years of articles.

To me, George was always the quietest of The Beatles. And at the same time, he was never the loudest. Looking back, I can see he was very, very quiet indeed. In fact, he said nothing at all to me. I will always remember his response when I asked him whether it was him who played the drums. He just looked at me in a deep and profound silence. As I saw my own image reflected in those deep brown eyes of his, I knew that I was in the presence of a very caring, very loving, very quiet human being.

Incidentally, I met Reg Presley of The Troggs on three separate occasions, and I once shared a good laugh with Chip Hawkes of The Tremeloes. But none of them were as much a part of the Beatles as George. Ah, The Sixties. Magic memories!

THE RT. REV. GEORGE CAREY, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: I am of the firm opinion that in some ways it is more than likely that George Harrison was second only to Sir Cliff Richard in his belief in God. But what exactly do we mean by "God"? That's quite a puzzler – and I'd be the last person to offer any sort of answer! If only George were still around to tell us! And he wrote some smashing tunes, too. Wasn't "Congratulations" one of his? It has a lot to tell us, not only about "congratulations" but also, as the singer makes clear, about "celebrations". Food for thought for all Christians in these difficult times.

MOHAMED AL FAYED: George Beatle? They fuggin kill him, you know what I telling you, Prince Fuggin Philip and the so-called Queen Mother, that's who, my friend. I never fuggin forgive them, they and their wig-big chums in secret so-called fuggin' services, they say, "We got rid Diana, we got rid Kennedy, now we get rid George Fuggin Beatle". My favourite George Beatle song? "Somefugginthing".

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: I heard the news of the tragic demiseration of top Beatle Paul Harrison with profound regards. As a musician, he lit a candle in our hearts that will continue to reverberverate long after it has exploded. "While My Catarrh Gently Weeps" is a classic song and so is Something. Hey, hold on, we can't just say "so is Something". Let's be more specificised, shall we? Make no mistake, we're gonna do our durnedest to find the name of another song George McCartney decomposed.

FERGAL KEANE: The dew sat heavy, oh so heavy, on the grass. The sun struggled vainly in its battle to lift its head above the clouds groaning in their misery. No, I don't think I shall ever forget the morning I turned on my old Roberts wireless and heard that oh so fateful news.

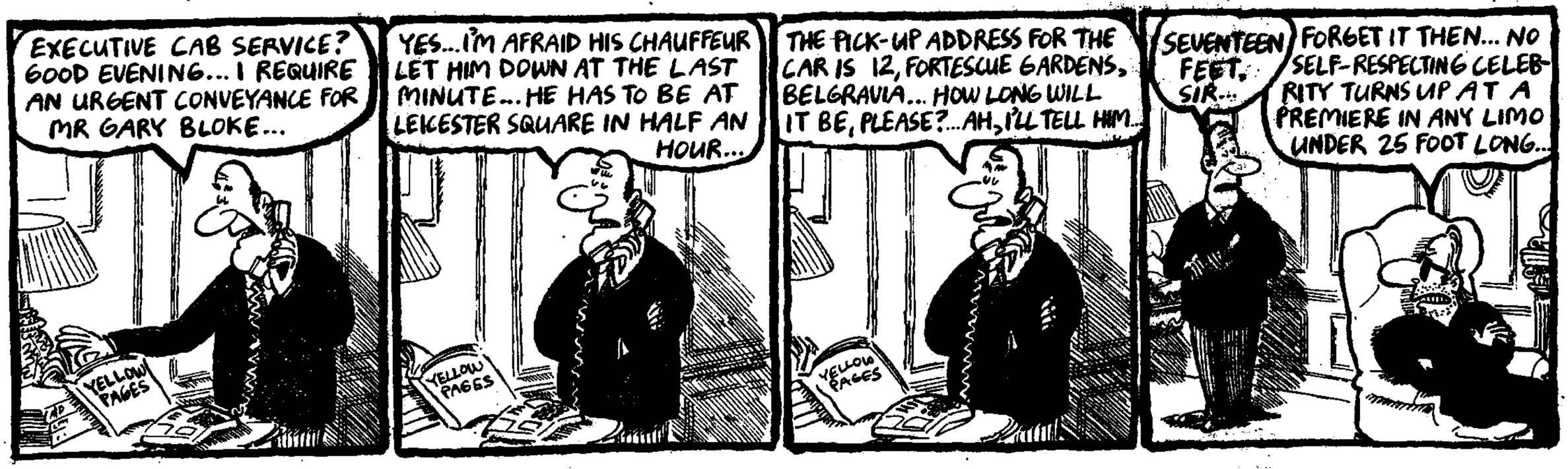
I write this with the tears dropping – drop, drop, drop – on my typewriter. I listen hard, and I hear them battling to make a tune – drop, drop, drippety-drop, drippety-drop-drop-drop – and I realise with a start that it is one of George's immortal tunes they are trying so desperately to communicate.

George was always my favourite Beatle. To me, he was just like me. And I, in turn, was like him. Sensitive as the cowslips of hope that blossom on the path of our dreams. Spiritual as a smokey fire on a winter's day, its candy-floss plumes drifting up and up and up like angels through the chimney-stack of longing. George, wherever you are, I trust you are reading this, taking real human love and comfort from these mournful words of mine as they flow like tears – the teariest of tears – onto the sad-sodden page.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER


EXECUTIVE CAB SERVICE? GOOD EVENING... I REQUIRE AN URGENT CONVEYANCE FOR MR GARY BLOKE...
YELLOW PAGES
YES... I'M AFRAID HIS CHAUFFEUR LET HIM DOWN AT THE LAST MINUTE... HE HAS TO BE AT LEICESTER SQUARE IN HALF AN HOUR...
YELLOW PAGES
THE PICK-UP ADDRESS FOR THE CAR IS 12, FORTESCUE GARDENS, BELGRAVIA... HOW LONG WILL IT BE, PLEASE?... AH, I'LL TELL HIM...
YELLOW PAGES
SEVENTEEN FEET, SIR...
FORGET IT THEN... NO SELF-RESPECTING CELEBRITY TURNS UP AT A PREMIERE IN ANY LIMO UNDER 25 FOOT LONG...

Literary Review

Books of the Year

FOR whose benefit, it might reasonably be asked, are the books of the year selections that crowd out newspaper arts sections on those dank November weekends intended?

Readers? No. They can't be bothered with the spectacle of Tom Paulin and co turning out the contents of their mental overnight bags. Writers? No. Who wants peer accolades when the punters are elsewhere? Curiously enough, the people who wax most enthusiastic over annual "best of" excursions are newspaper executives. Books of the year come for free, you see. Consequently for the *Independent* to lavish four whole pages on its pre-Christmas round-up is to knock around £2,000 off the budget of some embattled arts editor at a stroke.

Inevitably, in these austere and right-thinking times, the really flagrant era of the books of the year puff is all but gone. The writer silently – or in some cases all too loudly – promoting his mistress or his drinking chum or his high table colleague became such a conspicuous figure in the public prints of the early 90s that editors turned faintly embarrassed about it. Contributors now make it a point of principle to show how high-minded they are: one could find Hermione Lee in the *Observer*, for example, recommending *A Responsibility to Awe* by the late Rebecca Elson from the Oxford Poetry series and then confessing that she was, gasp, part of the series' editorial team.

Inevitably, there are a few unreconstructed dinosaurs still paddling through the swamps of Wapping. Readers of the *Weekend Telegraph*, for instance, could find that entirely disinterested pundit Hugh Massingberd lauding a collection of journalism by the Duchess of Devonshire, a lady whom naturally he never met in his life, before going on in *The Spectator* to recommend works by his late mentors Anthony Powell and James Lees-Milne.

In general, though, this kind of thing now gets done by stealth. Doubtless the fact that three of the six books urged by D.J. Taylor on readers of the *Independent* and *The Spectator* were the products of his own publisher, Chatto & Windus, was simple coincidence. Similarly, I wouldn't dream of suggesting that Charles Moore and Noel Malcolm's enthusiasm for Andrew Roberts' *Napoleon and Wellington* had anything to do with the fact that these three gentlemen are all pillars of Telegraph newspapers. No indeed.

But apart from outright (as opposed to covert) venality the

books of the year round-ups had everything that the cynical onlooker expects from them. There were, predictably, those who misread the literary editor's instructions and gaily plumped for books that were published last year or even further back. Showing off was endemic – notably in the *Observer* where Jonathan Meades and Anita Brookner waxed lyrical over Michel Houellebecq's *Plateforme*, which, in case you were fancying a trip to Waterstone's in hot pursuit, has so far only been published in French.

Elsewhere the gallant overstatement took its bow ("This year Routledge did a great service to humanity by launching a series of reprints of classic texts in history, philosophy and sociology" Alain de Botton informed readers of the *Weekend Telegraph*. Nice little books, Al, but a service to humanity?) along with the no-nonsense impressed-in-spite-of-myself line ("I am no Philip Roth fan" Jon Snow boldly disclosed before recommending Roth's new one) and the sternly emphatic judgement (Anita thought there was "little doubt" that W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* was groove of the year, although "a fairly punishing read".)

Rest assured, though, there is one small corner of Fleet Street in which the old ways persist. To a man, or woman, those invited to fill the hulking best-of selection spread over two issues of *The Spectator* ignored the hints about brevity and indulged themselves in a lavish riot of garrulousness, spleen and puffing old mates. The 500 words or so produced by Bevis Hillier, for example, began with the incongruous remark that "11 September 1951... was my first day at Reigate Grammar School". And what, you wonder, did this have to do with anything? There followed a labyrinthine anecdote about Hillier wanting to mark this anniversary by showing up at his alma mater but facing a contending attraction in the form of an invite to the launch party of Christopher Woodward's *In Ruins*, and then seeing the card on the mantelpiece reading "September 11... in Ruins" and... No problem for the reader, of course – he or she stops after the first paragraph – but there must be easier ways of filling space.

Elsewhere in the *Spec* Philip Hensher managed to qualify in all three of the old-style book round-up categories, that is: preen, draw attention to your own books and trash your enemies. After a breathless saunter around some of the stuff he read in his capacity as a Booker judge (some specimen adjectives were "delightful and profound", "rapturous, natural, penetrating" and "magnificent, unforgettable") Phil couldn't resist plugging his new one ("a long novel about the first Afghan War called *The Mulberry Empire*, which comes out next April") before moving on to a gratuitous assault. "I have absolutely no idea why Jonathan Coe's *The Rotters' Club* was so praised; the way it dragged the IRA, the Nazi Holocaust, the death of socialism etc into what might have been an engaging school story, struck me as utterly disgraceful."

And what did mesdames and messieurs the critics think was their collective cup of tea this year? The votes for Ian McEwan's *Atonement* and Peter Carey's *The True History of the Kelly Gang* ran into double figures, closely followed by Beryl Bainbridge's *According to Queeney* and WG. Interesting left-field contenders included Jonathan Rose's *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class*. Hardly anything, of course, written by promising unknowns or published beyond the citadels of literary London. What do we like, those punters among you who are still reading? We like stuff we've heard of, thanks, all the identikit fodder of the highstreet shelves, and if you don't like it too, well, tough.

Books & Bookmen

■ A FEW weeks ago it might have been nicknamed the *Harry Potter Times*... now the *Tolkien Times* would be a better moniker for Rupert Murdoch's Sunday broadsheet following its adulatory coverage of the forthcoming film version of JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

On 9 December the *Sunday Times* not only gave readers a free *Lord of the Rings* poster, it described the film as "a modern film classic" in a page-three "news" story and devoted the first two pages of its news review to a profile of the author.

It has already been pointed out that the film is made by AOL Time Warner which has a movie deal with Sky, but an equally if not more lucrative spin off from the film is the soaring sales of Tolkien books, published by, er, Murdoch-owned HarperCollins, which has repackaged *Lord of the Rings* (extremely expensively) to coincide with the release of the film.

■ A RECENTLY discarded senior employee of the Orion Group has been muttering venomously that Jean-Louis Lisimachio, the humourless French chairman of Orion and boss of Orion's proprietors, Hachette, is negotiating with Herr Bertie Bertelsmann, the boss of the German publishing empire which owns, in the UK, both Random House and Transworld, to acquire the troublesome Orion Group.

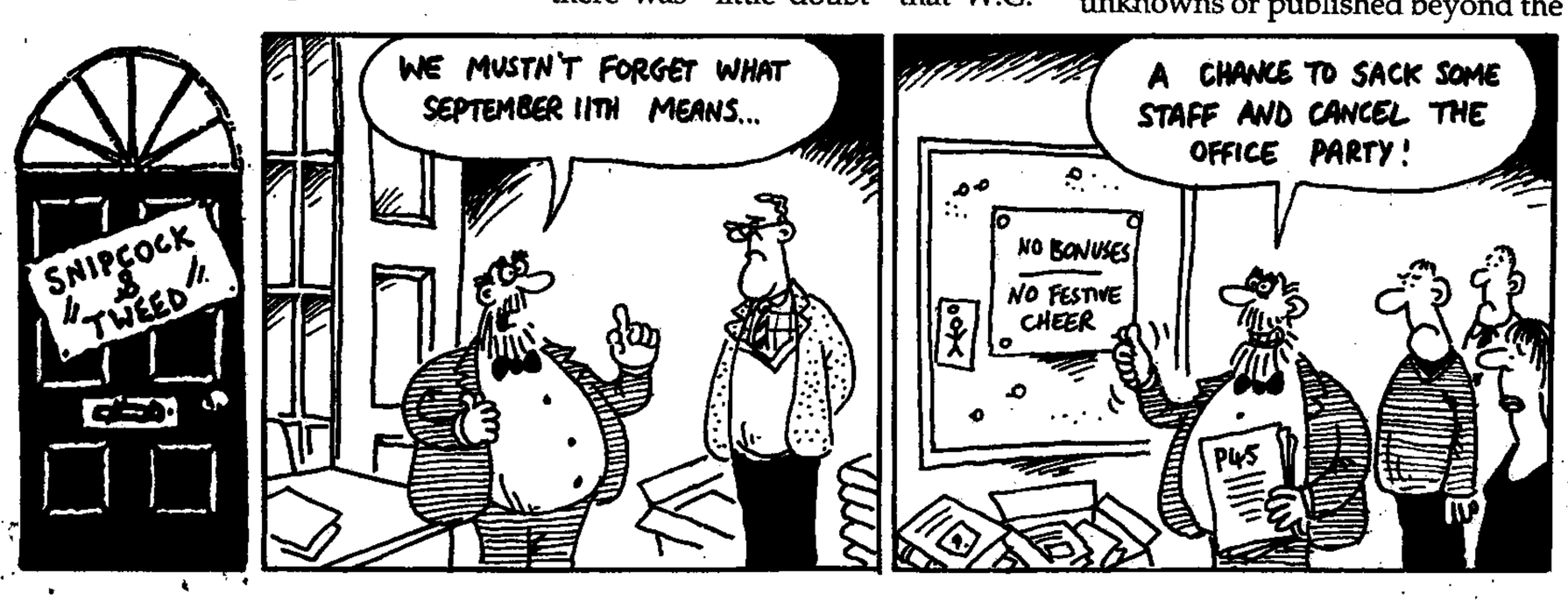
The stealthy deal may or may not be being done behind the back of Orion's beleaguered chief executive Anthony "Fatty" Cheetham, who has been despatched to New York. Is this to get "Fatty" out of the way while the deal is consummated, or is he trying to ingratiate himself with Bertlesmann's publishing bosses in New York?

■ PENGUIN has played a cruel trick on Marcus Clapham, the man behind the Wordsworth Classics.

Marcus, who once was decanted from Penguin, realised Penguin's over-priced Classics were a pretentious folly. Wordsworth's subsequent out of copyright versions at £1 or whatever, without grandiose introductions, then popped up and sold millions with royalties going to no one, the introducers, if they were unlucky, receiving a case of something undrinkable.

Penguin then rehired Marcus to reinvigorate *its* Classics list. This he and his former Wordsworth colleague Clive Reynard have done dramatically in two or three years, but Penguin has failed to make them sell, with Wordsworth still doing five times better. Clapham has been made the scapegoat, sacked by Penguin's head girl, Helen Fraser.

'Bookworm'

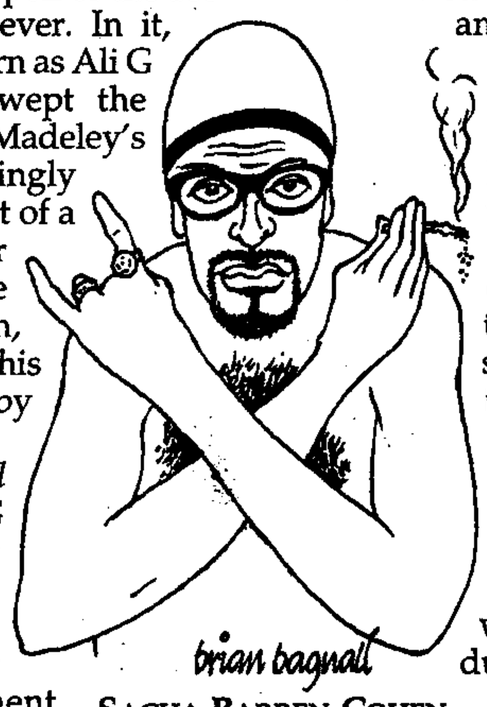

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
WE MUSTN'T FORGET WHAT SEPTEMBER 11TH MEANS...
A CHANCE TO SACK SOME STAFF AND CANCEL THE OFFICE PARTY!
NO BONUSES
NO FESTIVE CHEER
P45

Christmas Turkey

Da Gospel According to Ali G

(Fourth Estate, £12.99)

EARLIER this year Channel 4 conducted a viewer's poll of the 100 worst TV moments ever. In it, Richard Madeley's turn as Ali G on This Morning swept the board. What made Madeley's cameo so scintillatingly repellent was the sight of a stolid middle-ager flinging himself at the zeitgeist bandwagon, *only to fall flat* on his face. He'd missed it by about a year.



SACHA BARREN-COHEN

Da Gospel According to Ali G smacks of the same *sort* of misjudgement, the only difference being that it's missed the moment by one year more. The puzzle here is that unlike the Madeley faux pas, the literary tie-in is spawn of Sacha Baron-Cohen himself (whom the *Grauniad* memorably described as "Ali G's alter ego"). It is, frankly, impossible to believe that a man who could toil to produce such an instantly memorable character (he used to practise his gab on the bus back from Haberdasher's) could then be happy to assist in its summary execution. Perhaps the money softened the blow.

Like the three videos (one every Christmas), the website and the range of quality T-shirts, *Da Gospel* follows the formula made famous in Baron-Cohen's three-minute skits on the risible *11 O'Clock Show*. The Staines massiv, the spliffs, the shellsuits and the faux-stupidity are all here in spades, but curiously the funny bit has been omitted. In the original interviews the joke was not Ali G's buffoonery – it was the interaction between a clever man acting dumb and an interlocutor who failed to see that this was a façade, and therefore made a proper turnip of himself.

Essentially the straight-outta-surburbia ploy was just a means to allow Baron-Cohen to go beyond the pale, for instance asking an Orangeman if he would marry a Catholic girl "if she was fit". He hoodwinked his victims because an audience with the "voice of youth" proved irresistible to those who didn't know what youth was. Their fear of being seen as fusty dunderheads took them to new levels of self-parody. It's fair to say that none of that's in here because you can't render the ins and outs of such a mismatch in print. In other words, Ali G without TV is a dead duck.

And yet the same could be said, for the same reasons, of last year's seasonal turkey, the woeful *Mrs Merton* tie-in, along with countless other superfluous addenda such as the latest *Ab Fab* hardback to accompany the smash hit of several years ago. The reason publishers like HarperCollins continue to pay hefty advances for elaborate coffee-table books is on the safe assumption that no one will read them. Bought as a gift, flicked through and filed, those who enjoy *Da Gospel* would have laughed at Ali G reciting the Maastricht Treaty, and those who don't won't be given it anyway. That makes the "book of the series" phenomenon a cosy, self-sufficient literary byway, selling more than Martin Amis but marginally outflanked by *The Beano Annual*. Which is about as good as it gets for an editor with targets to meet.

So whoopee-do for Fourth Estate, yah-boo-sucks to the neutral who fancied a giggle. Faced with flogging yesterday's idea once more, Baron-Cohen has regressed, instead filling the void with sub-*Loaded* tits 'n' ass gags and hilarious new terms for menstruation – just at the time when ABCs are reading the lad mag its last rites.

Beneath the smut the running joke is the transcripted fly-boy speak. Interestingly, there are at least four websites offering "translators" for this famous Ali rap. You type in plain English and it spits out a Geed-up version. "The" becomes "Da", "I" becomes "me", and when that wears thin press a button and the machine inserts a nob gag. Which makes *Da Gospel According to Ali G* 100 pages of glorified data entry. "Now I iz never read a hole book and I don't expect u to do de same" says our man early on. No chance of that.

"I've discovered this amazing diet!"

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

WHEN Pierre Boulez was arrested last week, in the middle of the night by over-zealous policemen on the hunt for dangerous subversives, it was apparently because a computer file had registered the fact that he once – many years ago – declared an enthusiasm for the burning down of opera houses.

A typically Boulezian piece of empty rhetoric, it never caused him to think twice about accepting lucrative engagements in the said houses; and until now he has never been stopped and searched for matches at the stage door. But this unlikely rebound from the past has caused much joy to those who have, over the years, fallen foul of the conductor's legendary *hauteur*. Composers of the kinds of music Boulez banished from performance are said to be scouring his *bon mots* for other comments that may be of interest to the police. One hope is that his famous 1950s essay *Schoenberg is Dead* may prove the basis for a charge of homicide.

● Bow-tied PR man Gavin Henderson, the principal of Trinity College of Music which recently moved from Marylebone to a new home at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, has made it quite clear that the naval college chapel, once a focal point for the local community, is now little more than a concert hall for his conservatoire.

One of Henderson's first actions on acquiring the site was to sack the popular chapel organist, former Trinity College student Nicholas Johnson (see *Eye 1032*), and replace him with a candidate of his own choosing. In August, 12 of the 16 members of the chapel choir, some of whom have sung there for over 30 years, resigned in protest at the sacking, only to be swiftly replaced by Trinity College students.

Now members of the chapel's extended concert choir – between 40 and 50 mainly local singers who have performed at the chapel's annual Christmas charity concert for more than 25 years – have been told their services are no longer required. This year's event in support of Save the Children was booked two years ago, but now the long-standing choristers have been informed that for "health and safety reasons" the concert will be performed instead by a small chamber choir and brass ensemble.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

Pseuds Corner

I can't remember whether it was Fernand Point or van Gogh or William Desdemaines-Hugon who said that the most difficult thing in the world is to make things simple. Maybe it was Pomaine. It was neo-classical.

JONATHAN MEADES
Times Magazine

Medem's third, extraordinary film focuses on Angel, a fumigator sent in to clear up a woodlice epidemic in a wine-growing area. Angel has schizophrenic tendencies, framed by Medem in a series of extraordinary motifs, repetitions and surreal dramatic moments.

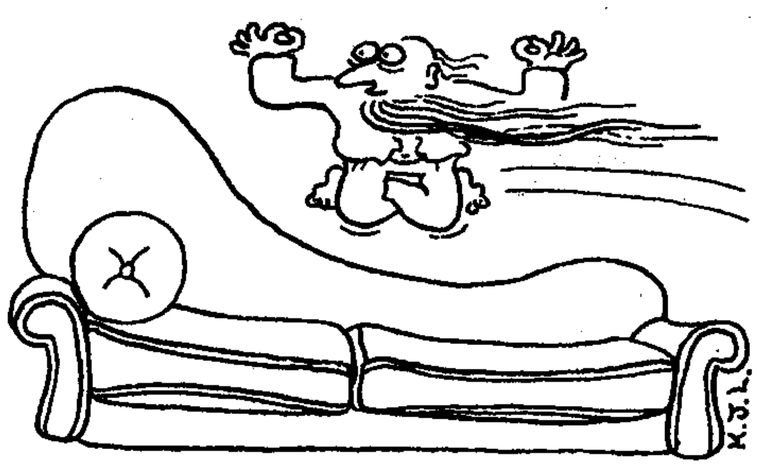
From the ICA website

Where to find the energy to engage with a culture in crisis when the crisis consists in the impossibility of engaging with the culture?

JOHN FRANZEN
quoted in *Sunday Times* profile

It's not written for the average person on the Tube, no. I wrote it [*The Obvious Diet*] for people like me, who have a lot going on in their lives.

ED VICTOR
Observer



...pausing only to ask the cook to whip up "a little something" for the arrival of her 87 year old Ashtanga yoga guru from India. "He's giving a masterclass," she [Trudie Styler] sighs, "in my house. It's such an honour."

Marie Claire

Everybody has a moment when they feel rock changed the world and for me it was clear: Donita Sparks of L7 reaching into her shorts at a rock festival, pulling out her Tampax and throwing it at the crowd. The red flag of revolution was raised that day.

RUARIDH NICOLL
Scotland on Sunday 'Spectrum' magazine

Pseuds Corporate

Under this new, fully integrated, end-to-end capability, Compaq will manage the full sales engagement with the end customer and subcontract aspects of the fulfilment, including the provision of third party options, to a collaborative partner. At all times, we remain accountable to the customer thereby representing a seamless purchase voyage.

Extract from UK&I "Operation Update 3 Maximising Opportunities"

CONTRIBUTORS: Paul Hale, Andy Bottomley, Davina Montagu, Edward Lindsay, Anon, M. Coates, 'Nux Vomica'

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

ENRON: ALL GONE

THE City and its "business" editors are all "stunned" by the disaster at Enron, the energy trader now in ruins after the biggest bankruptcy in modern times.

Among the more ardent admirers of Enron and its charismatic chairman Kenneth Lay have been the *Financial Times* and the *Economist*, which earlier this year drew its readers' attention to "Enron's spectacularly successful internet effort".

Least penitent of the City courtiers is Irwin Stelzer, Rupert Murdoch's favourite commentator, who gets regular access and a warm welcome at 10 Downing Street. On 2 December Stelzer used more than his usual space in the *Sunday Times* Business News to praise Lay for "converting American industry into a lean, mean, internationally competitive machine". How could he write such palpable drivel? Early editions of the *Sunday Times* gave a clue. At the bottom of the article was a short statement that Mr Stelzer is a consultant to Enron. In later editions, this information vanished, leaving *Sunday Times* readers with the impression that Mr Stelzer had no relevant interests.

In Britain, the glories of Enron are now being enjoyed by some of the country's biggest banks whose customers must now pay for reckless investment in Enron's lean and competitive machine. Barclays, the Royal Bank of Scotland and Abbey National have already admitted debts to Enron, many of them unsecured, amounting to £600m.

WAKEY WAKEHAM

Throughout the last decade of Enron disasters, the *Eye* has consistently exposed the financial trickery and political sensitivity that made the company what it is today. Way back in 1990 (*Eye* 751) we noticed the close relationship between Enron and the then secretary of state for energy, John Wakeham, who gave the firm permission to build a huge gas-fired power station on Teesside.

As an accountant, Mr Wakeham was much trusted by his two prime ministers, Margaret Thatcher and John Major. In 1993, Prince Charles, worried about political controversy, dropped out of a commitment to open the power station on Teesside. John (by now Lord) Wakeham cheerfully took the prince's place. In 1994, when he finally left the government, Wakeham promptly joined the main board of Enron, and has been there ever since, securing a place on the illustrious audit committee.

The Tories' policy of energy privatisation was vigorously opposed by Labour and its idealistic spokesman on industrial matters, Tony Blair. But when Blair became party leader in 1994 his attitude changed. New Labour became much more friendly with the private energy companies in general and with the Tory peer in particular. When Blair became prime minister in 1997, Wakeham kept his job as chairman of the press complaints commission and, later, became chairman of the committee to determine the future of the House of Lords. Wakeham had a host of other business responsibilities (he was a director of the arms company Vosper Thorneycroft, for instance), but none was so lucrative as his post at Enron, sweetened by an additional consultancy "to advise on European business" worth an extra $72,000 a year. (Following Enron's demise Wakeham, along with other directors, now faces legal action in the US from disgruntled investors.)

A GOOD LAY

One of the central lessons learnt by Enron was that nothing creates a higher return than investment in political parties friendly to the government. In the United States, relatively paltry donations to both major parties, but especially to the party headed by Kenneth Lay's close Texas buddy George W. Bush (including $10,000 for that controversial Florida recount in the presidential election) easily paid for themselves in government contracts. Mr Lay even managed to secure a seat on an advisory committee on energy policy that was not available to anyone else outside government.

In Britain, Enron became a devoted convert to "new" Labour. Enron executives and their lobbyists GJW were regular guests at "new" Labour dinners, breakfasts and conference parties. The return was every bit as lucrative as in the US. In September 1998, the *Eye* warned Peter Mandelson, then trade and industry secretary, to take care before giving permission to Enron to buy Wessex Water. Ignoring the advice, Mandy happily handed the company to Enron without even referring the matter to the monopolies commission. In 1999, industry minister Helen Liddell, who got her industrial experience as a director of a newspaper company owned by Robert Maxwell, gave Enron permission to build yet another gas-fired power station on the Isle of Grain in Kent.

This ministerial enthusiasm for privately-owned gas-fired power stations clashed with Labour's stated energy policy to slow down the Tory "dash for gas" in order to protect Britain's languishing coal industry. The apparent clash did not last long. In the summer of 1999, new Labour decided the "dash for gas" was a thoroughly good idea, even if it meant that the dashing gas companies hijacked trains previously vital to the coal industry (see *Eye* 988). The long love affair between "new" Labour and Enron reached its climax in January last year when the company's European chairman, Ralph Hodge, and the environmental director of Wessex Water, Gareth Jones, both got MBEs in the new year honours (*Eye* 1019).

SEE YOU LATER, REGULATOR

"New" Labour ministers defend their new commitment to privatisation by proclaiming their faith in regulation. They insist that big private companies like Enron have to conform to rules enforced by regulators. The response of the Enron board has been to recruit the regulators. In October 2000, the *Eye* reported that Claire Spottiswoode, the former government gas regulator, had joined the board of a company called Asturix. This was a new name for Wessex Water. But now, she tells the *Observer*, she has left the company because she was not happy with the accounts. In August this year, the *Eye* reported the appointment to the board of Teesside

Hey, hey Kenneth Lay. How many men will we kill today? Wakeham (left) and Lay opening Enron's Teeside Power Plant 1993

Power Ltd, an Enron subsidiary, of the former government regulator of electricity, Stephen Littlechild.

FASTOW AND LOOSE

Enron's impetuous advance continued — as did the gullibility of its auditor, the *Eye*'s (and "new" Labour's) old friend Arthur Andersen, who continued to sign off Enron's accounts as proper and legitimate. Somehow Andersen managed not to notice the disturbing habit of the Enron board to sanction separate deals carried out by favoured executives. The deals plundered Enron funds without being recorded in the balance sheets.

Among the beneficiaries of this practice were the company's energetic power station development director, the squillionairess Rebecca Mark, who played such an enterprising role in the early days of Enron in Britain; her close friend John Wing, forever accoutred in Texas cowboy boots and Stetson; and the recently-retired chief financial officer, Andrew Fastow. The deals spun by Mr Fastow alone, none of them clear from the company balance sheets, are said to have been worth a billion pounds.

The axe fell slowly but surely. The sacking in October of Mr Fastow, the enormous black holes in the Enron finances, the House of Lords judgement in favour of the North Sea gas companies suing Enron, and the cumulative burden of grotesque bonus payments to directors and cronies, all combined to drive the company down the drain.

What will the British government do about it? Will any Labour minister dare institute or even demand a proper inquiry into the whole sorry mess? One recent report in the *Eye* does not hold out much hope. At a packed Fabian fringe meeting at this year's Labour party conference, Robin Cook, leader of the Commons, and two very friendly Labour journalists, Charles Leadbetter and Polly Toynbee, spoke unctuously about the environment. The meeting was "sponsored" (paid for) by Wessex Water, whose chief executive Colin Skellett moved the delegates close to tears as he stressed the imperative for responsible private companies to do their bit for the environment (*Eye* 1038).

There was no reference to the numerous convictions of Wessex Water for negligently pouring shit into rivers, or to the fact that Wessex Water is number four in the Environment Agency's "league of shame" — or to the equally numerous convictions of Enron companies for breaking safety rules and killing workers. Nor was anyone tactless enough to predict the impending (and inevitable) doom of this typical "new" Labour company.

LEARNING THE HARD WAY

WHO says investigative journalism doesn't work? On 16 October the BBC's investigative radio show *File on Four* broadcast a disturbing item about the government's individual learning account (ILA) scheme, which offered grants to people who wanted to improve their education outside universities or colleges.

The scheme attracted two and a half million people. But as the programme made clear, it was wide open to abuse, not least by the providers of courses, the content and quality of which were not examined.

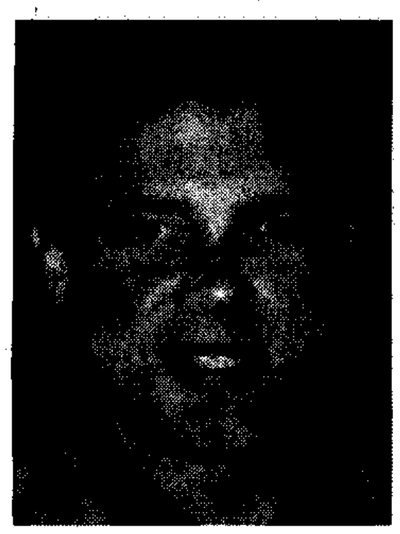
The programme, broadcast on 16 October and repeated on 21 October, exposed a rising tide of complaints from people who said they were being ripped off. On 24 October Estelle Morris, education secretary, announced that the ILA programme was to be "suspended from December 7".

She revealed that she "had concerns about the way some ILAs have been promoted and sold" and she blamed "poor administration" for the collapse of the scheme. Surely this cannot have been a reference to the skills of the *Eye*'s old chum Capita, which was given a £50m contract over five years to, er, administer the scheme? There was, said Morris, "growing evidence that some companies are abusing the scheme by offering low value, poor quality learning". She concluded that any new accounts, whether they were fraudulent or not, would be closed on December 7.

The announcement of a full-scale fraud inquiry by police ensured the whole scheme was shut long before that deadline. Already 250 training companies are under investigation. But what will become of the 8,500 other training schemes? As so often with new Labour panic measures, the baby has been thrown out with the bath water. The decision to suspend the ILAs has devastated many genuine community organisations trying to help people to educate themselves. James O'Brien, managing director of Pitman Training, explained: "With this scheme, it was easy to make a fast buck and get out. There were no rules, and no monitoring". As for Crapita, "this is a company with very little control over or understanding of the scheme. They just let the cowboys in."

MMR: A WAKE FOR WAKEFIELD

SO THE Royal Free hospital and medical establishment have finally forced out Dr Andrew Wakefield (right), the leading gastro-enterologist who found that his child patients who suddenly suffered regressive autism also developed simultaneous and peculiar disease of the gut and bowel – and dared to suggest that the triple MMR vaccine *might* be the link.



How ironic that as he leaves the north London hospital and medical school two new pieces of research have appeared in the United States. They suggest he is definitely on to something and that it is vital he continue his research.

The first comes from Dr Timothy Buie, a paediatric gastro-enterologist from Harvard General Hospital, who has been examining the gut and digestive systems of children with autism and has found similar chronic inflammation with rare lymphoid nodular hyperplasia — enlarged lymph nodes – as Dr Wakefield.

Dr Buie announced his findings last week at a conference on autism in Portland, Oregon, the day before the announcement of Dr Wakefield's forced departure. Dr Buie echoed Dr Wakefield's and indeed the parents' diagnosis of these children that they are "ill, in distress and pain, and not just mentally, neurologically dysfunctional".

But perhaps the most important research comes in the *Journal of Neuroimmunology*, where the department of paediatrics at the University of Minnesota studied immune responses in children with developmental regression and autism spectrum disorders (ASD). In a line that would have caused outrage among our medical establishment had Dr Wakefield written it, the researchers reported that "many parents of ASD children have reported that the onset of developmental regression and autistic behaviour and/or further deterioration occurred following immunisation and/or benign childhood infection." Because some also had lymphoid hyperplasia, they hypothesised that autistic children may have an aberrant immune response to normally benign other factors — such as immunisation.

And — yes — they found that a significant number of children with autism, compared with their "normal" siblings and another control group, exhibited an abnormal immune reaction. "These results may support our hypothesis that ASD patients have aberrant innate immune responses at high frequency, which may predispose them to adverse reactions to immunisations… In summary, our results indicate for the first time that a number of ASD children with developmental regression, likely demonstrate aberrant adaptive immune responses that may also result in aberrant adaptive immune responses." In others words, in a small number of children vaccination or childhood disease can trigger or aggravate developmental regression. Which is exactly what Dr Wakefield has been working on.

The *Eye* has already reported that in a large number of the Royal Free patients, the measles virus has been found in the gut and elsewhere. Two key questions are: could this be the trigger; and did the virus come from the MMR jab, or is it a wild virus?

Anne Hewitt, whose son Thomas is autistic and has severe bowel problems, has no doubt: "I think it just a matter of time before it is proven that my son has vaccine damage." Thomas was a normal happy toddler. He had about 30 words and had passed all the developmental milestones. At 13 months he had his MMR jab and within three weeks, Anne and her husband Martin noticed that he had changed dramatically.

"He could not tolerate noise or lights. We could not take him anywhere and developmentally everything just came to a full stop. We were so shattered, I cannot tell you." Within weeks he began to regress, his health deteriorated and he lost those skills he had. Autism was finally diagnosed at two-and-a-half. By this time Thomas was head-banging, screaming and harming himself, with no explanation, other than autism. That is until they took him to the Royal Free. There Wakefield's colleagues found he had no bowel function. He was completely impacted through the large intestine and had inflammation throughout his digestive system. He was screaming and head banging in pain. He has been treated there ever since and although his bowels are still seriously misfunctioning, the condition is being managed and Thomas' pain — and his "autistic" behaviour — have eased.

"I am utterly appalled and deeply worried that Andrew Wakefield has been pushed out like this. He is the only one listening to the parents, looking and examining the children and actually trying to find out what has caused their dreadful conditions. The others play with statistics and ignore the children."

Pharmacist Julie Loch tells an identical story about her son Oliver. "Before my son was seen at the Royal Free he was in constant pain. He could only express this by means of tantrums and by exhibiting self-injurious behaviour. The entire family was at a loss as to how we could help him. After treatment for bowel disease, the self injurious behaviour stopped. The tantrums decreased and my son began to smile again. Some skills returned and although he has a diagnosis of autism, he is making progress. When my son was at his lowest ebb and we were in a state of complete despair, Andrew Wakefield and his colleagues were the only professionals in the UK who were prepared to listen and to help. Because of them, my son has a much-improved quality of life and for that I am eternally and deeply grateful.

"I think it is scandalous that an open-minded, caring and gifted professional like Dr Wakefield should be treated in such a shabby manner. I am concerned that proper research into the safety of MMR may now be compromised. I fear that the chance for research into possible cures for the bowel disease that my son and so very many other children have will also be jeopardised."

In fact Dr Wakefield's survival at the Royal Free has been under threat for a long time as the medical establishment, led by the department of health and the Public Health Laboratory Service, closed ranks. The man who had received 11 pharmaceutical industry awards and was only recently elected to the fellowship of the Royal College of Pathology, suddenly found it hard to raise grants. Opposition also came from among his colleagues at the Royal Free.

His once large team of some 12 to 14 had dwindled away to three or four. When the supportive head of his department, Prof John Walker Smith, retired, he was not replaced. When Brent Taylor, professor of paediatrics at the hospital and whose papers dismissing any link between MMR and autism have been repeatedly quoted by the health department, used Wakefield's patients' files for his study of autistic children in north London, neither Wakefield nor, it would appear, were some of the families consulted. A complaint has been submitted about the apparent unauthorised use of files by the Hewitt family to the General Medical Council.

The good news is that Dr Wakefield's "deal" with the Royal Free allows his colleagues to continue research work for two years and allows him access to all the records and data. Meanwhile the Minnesota and Harvard studies are adding to the evidence being compiled by lawyers acting for the thousand-plus children who claim they have been damaged by the MMR vaccine and are suing the pharmaceutical companies.

CARE OF THE ELDERLY

MUST CHAI HARDER

AN independent inspector has been called in to investigate claims of neglect, distress and suffering in an old people's care home owned by a company headed by Dr Chai Patel, Tony Blair's favourite private healthcare guru.

News of the inquiry into the £600-plus a week Lynde House in Twickenham, run by Westminster Healthcare, comes after a story in the last *Eye* which revealed serious allegations of abuse and neglect in a Kent home run by Bupa. One of Bupa's directors, Des Kelly, has, like Dr Patel, been advising the government on the care of the elderly.

The Lynde House inquiry was launched by Kingston and Richmond health authority after local MP Dr Vince Cable organised a public meeting at which families and friends of residents outlined a catalogue of disturbing allegations of neglect. They included leaving residents in their own waste for hours; unexplained bruising; a resident's leg ulcer being "left stinking and caked with dried pus"; another being left sitting naked from the waist down with the door and window open; residents left unattended in bathroom hoists; delay in getting medical attention; delay in bringing food and water; not answering alarm bells; failing to administer drugs or leaving them in front of residents who were incapable of helping themselves.

Recent statements provided to the *Eye* catalogue further allegations which we will be reporting in the next issue.

In Kent, meanwhile, the care workers who blew the whistle on disturbing claims of abuse and neglect at Bupa's Isard House were last week awarded sums of between £1,000 and £1,500 at the industrial tribunal. The whistleblowers are refusing compensation, claiming Bupa has been let off the hook because the tribunal ignored or watered down their claims — and continued to employ the woman accused of encouraging the abusive culture — against the demands of critical social service inspectors.

FOLLOW-UP… FOLLOW-UP…

■ **BLANTYRE HOUSE:** After a year of apparent inertia the inquiry into complaints of bullying and harassment brought by former Blantyre House prison governor Eoin McLelland-Murray following the botched raid on his jail 18 months ago, has sprung into action.

A week last Friday the home office team investigating the complaints against area manager Tom Murtagh went to Blantyre to question some of Mr McLelland-Murray's witnesses. Er… except that some of his key witnesses, including Dave Newport, his former deputy, and principal officer Peter Collard had not been summoned.

Fortunately they heard, via the prison grapevine, that the inquiry team was at the jail and they gatecrashed the meeting. Newport was able to reveal, for example, how Murtagh had once come to jail to tell McLelland-Murray that the *News of the World* was about to write an exposé of a named inmate's activities when he was on temporary release from the jail. It triggered a huge investigation by McLelland-Murray, who was later to find the whole thing was a wind-up. Newport also revealed how Murtagh used to publicly criticise McLelland-Murray for sending Newport to deputise for him, when he was absent because of a commitment to his Cambridge criminology degree – sanctioned by, er, Tom Murtagh.

Could the flurry of activity have anything to do with the fact that two working days later Prison Service chief Martin Narey was due to give evidence before the home office select committee, which damned the raid and which was to ask him about the delayed inquiry?

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

THE claimed billionaire status of the phoney pharaoh Mohamed Fayed looks even more fanciful now that the latest financial facts and figures about his Harrods empire are in. But his reputation as a man uncomfortable with the restrictions imposed by public companies is more than merited.

While profits at the Knightsbridge cash machine halved more than £30m was siphoned off from Harrods into offshore Fayed companies by dubious, self-serving share deals. He also extracted another £60m by paying dividends unavailable in profits from reserves and perhaps convenient property sales to help keep his high-spending show on the road. At the same time Harrods was going ever deeper in debt to the bank.

No wonder there are continuing rumours that Fayed is looking for a buyer of the top people's store. How otherwise will he ever repay his new best friends, the Royal Bank of Scotland?

But first let's consider the strange share dealings in Harrods Online, the internet vehicle launched two years ago to sell Harrods goods on the web and now offering offshore online sports betting.

At the time internet retailing was projected to be the next big thing. It wasn't. By Christmas 1999 the figures for retail spending in the internet's US backyard were already suggesting what many suspected all along. Virtual shopping could not compete with the real thing in satisfaction either as an experience or in choice never mind delivery. Within months the dot com boom had bust and since then internet retailers have been among the biggest casualties.

"I'd like to wish you a Dickensian Christmas"

One of those victims was Harrods. But the same is not true of its owner Mohamed Fayed. Another of his companies made more than £30m from selling over-priced shares in Harrods Online to the store.

In December 1999 Harrods (owners – the Fayed family) paid $8m for 350,000 shares or 3.5 percent of the Irish-registered online company. The seller was Danamon Enterprises BV, an offshore company in which Fayed had "an indirect material interest" linked, it seems, to the Bermuda partnership which is the ultimate family owner of the Harrods empire. Just who owns Harrods Online other than Fayed in various forms has never been made clear.

Between February and October 2000 Harrods pumped a further $47m (£32m) into the coffers of Karimco SA, a second offshore company in which Fayed also had "a similar indirect material interest" in return for another 21.5 percent of Harrods Online. The Harrods Online shares were owned by Danamon but Karimco received the money!

Throughout most of this period the value of internet retailers was nose-diving to extinction. Remember Boo, Boxman, Lets Buy It? Yet Harrods continued to use the same price per share – $23 – it had used for the first purchase in December 1999 which, according to the directors, including chairman Fayed, "approximated to market value" of the unquoted company! This valued Harrods Online at an unchanging $230m or some £150m.

With the final audit looming in October this year the Harrods directors suddenly decided to review this remarkable decision which had put £37m in Fayed's offshore pocket. Not surprising given not only what was happening in the sector but the fact that for the entire year royalty income due to the store from Harrods Online was just £66,000 of which not a penny had been paid by the year end in January. Harrods also recharged £5m in expenses to the online company and purchased goods from it worth £300,000.

This review – relating the prices paid to Karimco to an independent index of internet retailers – revealed, surprise, surprise, that Harrods had been over-charged by millions of dollars on each share deal. Harrods paid the company in which its chairman had a "material interest" twice or three times what independent experts said the Harrods Online shares were really worth. The true market value of 25 percent of Harrods Online by October this year was not the £37.26m paid to Fayed's company but just £4.7m! Harrods Online was worth around £20m not £150m.

Perhaps not surprisingly in such circumstances Harrods has now sold its Harrods Online shares back to Danamon for a "consideration" equal to just £12,000 more than the unjustified total price it paid. A profit after all. Whether this £37m was cash is not stated. Nor is there any explanation of why Danamon paid when it did not receive Harrods' money or how Danamon was able to pay if it was cash or what happened to the more than £30m paid to its "associate" company Karimco. Has Karimco or Fayed repaid any of the cash and if so did it come from the bank loan or the dividend? These are perhaps questions which will also interest RBS not to mention the taxman.

If Harrods was a publicly owned company, the Harrods Online deals would have had to have been put to a shareholders vote and advice obtained from the company advisers as to their merit. It is unlikely they would have gone ahead. Because Harrods is Fayed's own private piggy bank, no such oversight exists. Yet it is hard to see how such transactions could ever have been approved by a board with any independent directors. Few if any such individuals burden the Harrods board.

It is easy to suggest that given Fayed is on both sides of the share deals he is merely moving money from one private pocket to another. But the money in the Harrods pocket comes with the help of creditors and most importantly bankers. Where does Danamon or Karimco's money come from if not indirectly Harrods? And the Harrods money is onshore and taxable.

The Harrods Online share deals are a classic case of an all-powerful shareholder obtaining a personal benefit from a company he controls. No wonder that come the audit it seems concerns may have been raised, perhaps by auditor PricewaterhouseCoopers or former Tory MP Charles Wardle, who mysteriously walked away from a £120,000-a-year job as a Fayed poodle last month after less than two years on the payroll. How else to explain the reversal of the share deals? If not then they most certainly should have been.

Harrods sales barely rose in the year to January 2001 from £427m to £436m. But much increased costs slashed the pre-tax profit from £39m to £20m. In 1995-6 Harrods tills took in £408m and produced a £64m profit. Hardly something to reassure the bankers upon whom Fayed has relied increasingly in recent years while spending profligately on Fulham, *Punch* and himself.

Nor will a study of the Harrods Holdings group accounts, essentially Harrods plus aviation services, which show profits collapsed from £31.5m to £5.6m. Yet despite this setback Fayed paid himself and his brothers offshore a dividend of a staggering £59.6m, of which all but £3m came from reserves mainly created from past profits and revaluation of the group's properties and other assets in previous years.

How you might ask is this possible? Well, the answer may lie in the sale of the Harrods depository in Knightsbridge to Bahrain International Bank. This deal for £52.5m went down in August. The otherwise unearned dividend was paid in October.

The near £60m is the first dividend Fayed has received since 1998. It is far larger than the dividends in the mid-90s when £50m was the peak. So what's up? Clearly the pharaoh is in need of cash to fund all those non-Harrods ventures, particularly Fulham, which has so far consumed at least £40m before this year's spending to play with the big boys in the Premiership. But the fact that Harrods needed to be repaid £37m in October for the internet share deals may also not be unrelated.

The route of the dividends is interesting. Harrods Holdings' two offshore shareholders are Altrafin Investments in the British Virgin Islands, home of Fulham's parent company, and Genpar in Panama. They would appear to have split £20.1m before the remaining £39.5m was passed on to the Alfayed Investment & Trust partnership in Bermuda. The Bermuda partnership represents the family interests of Fayed and his two brothers. It

THE DIRECTORS

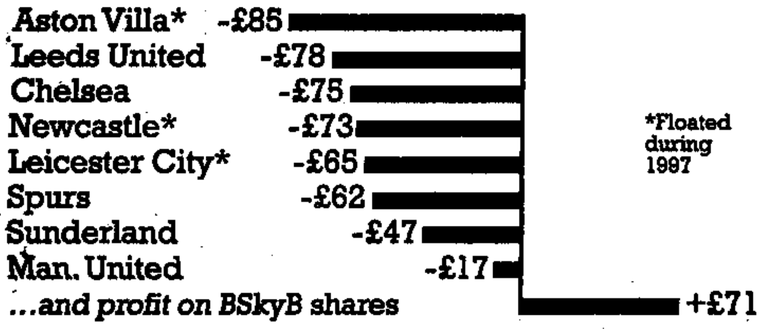
DREDGE/RIGG

CHRISTMAS IS A GREAT TIME TO IMPROVE STAFF MORAL SIR JULIAN...
IT CERTAINLY IS ROGER — WATCH THIS...
SEE HIM? USED TO BE OUR COMMERCIAL MANAGER
HO! HO! HO!
SANTA GROTTO

Stock Horror Football Christmas Special

A footie Christmas – ho, ho, ho

Losses on £100 invested 5 years ago in...



may also be linked to Danamon and Karimco. But is the same true of Altrafin and Genpar? Only the pharaoh, who is sphinx-like on such personal matters, knows. But it is certain the Inland Revenue, who since last year have been reviewing how Fayed finances his lifestyle and hobbies, will want to find out.

Just how this giant cash extraction sits with Fayed's new bankers RBS remains to be seen. The parent company accounts reveal that a year ago Fayed borrowed £350m from RBS over 20 years. Immediately £285m went out to repay former bankers HSBC. By the January 2001 year end Fayed had drawn all but £11.5m of that facility. But that is not the limit of the pharaoh's

"I'd love to help you out, but times are hard..."

borrowings. Harrods also had an overdraft or working capital facility of £83m by the year end, admittedly down from the £144m he owed HSBC a year before.

Fayed raised a net new £65m, just over the cost of the dividend, from RBS in return for mortgaging the store and his other Harrods assets. This was achieved by Harrods and other properties valued at some £530m being transferred into a new subsidiary, Harrods Property, in return for cash from the RBS bank loan and shares. Harrods will now have to pay a rent to Harrods Property which is designed to pay interest on the bank loan.

But despite the new loan Fayed's cash position at Harrods has worsened and his debts increased even as trading at the store continues to suffer. At the year end the parent company had cash and bank balances of just £37m against £136m the year before and was due to repay creditors £204m within a year. The group cash figure was £18m against £45m. It was due to pay creditors £80m. There had been a net cash outflow of £80m. Borrowings had increased by £53m and net cash available had fallen by £27m. All these figures were much worse than before the refinancing.

Net debt in January 2001 was £315m compared with £240m a year before. And since then Fayed admits trading has been "difficult". Not surprising for a store heavily dependent on American tourists. All of which suggests the debt position will be even worse next month when the current year ends. A position not improved by the near £100m Fayed has taken out of the business at a time when trading is "difficult".

'Slicker'

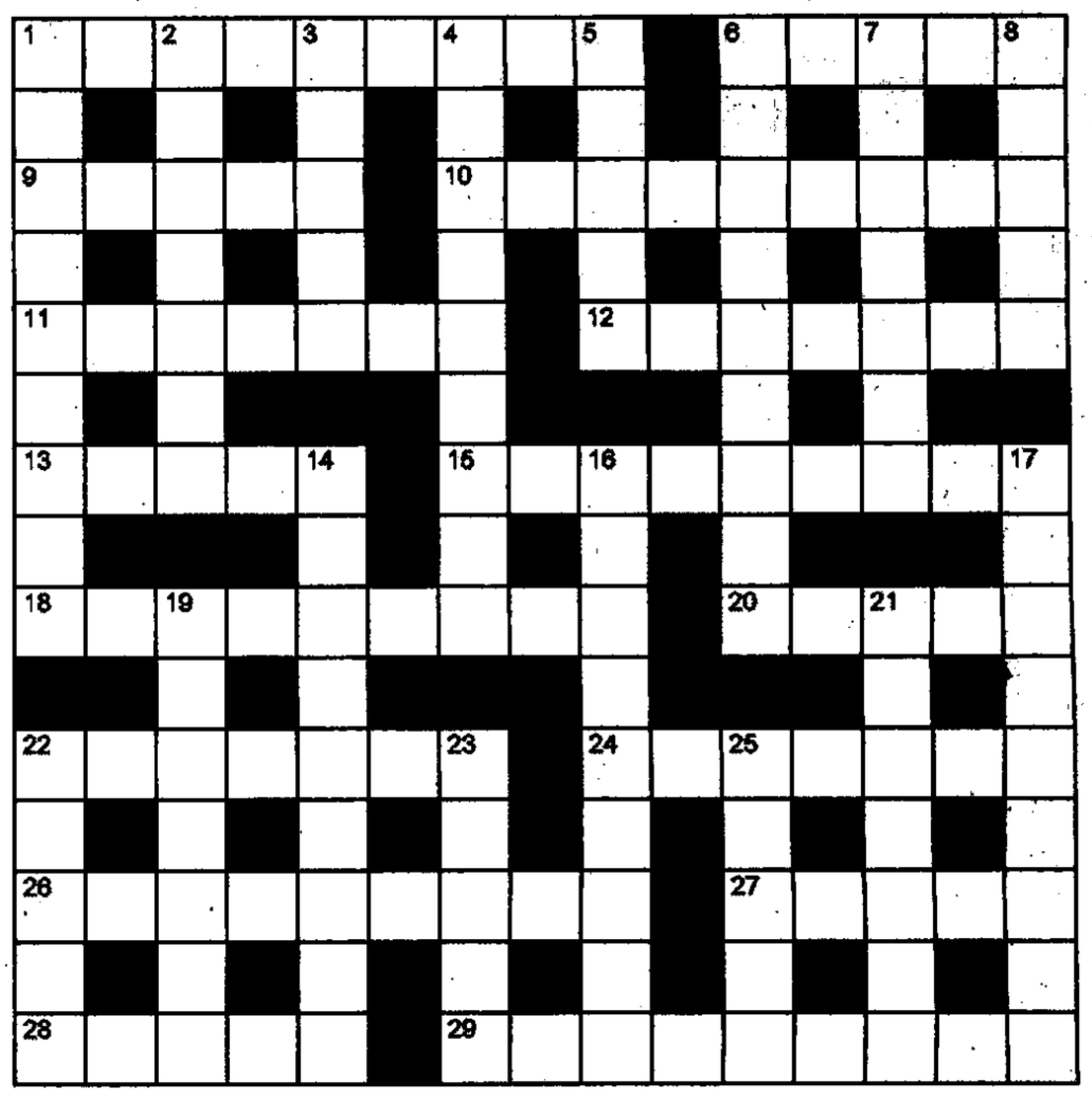
EYE CROSSWORD 198

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 20 December 2001.

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk

★ NEXT ISSUE: Bumper-sized Cyclops puzzle – £250 prize!



ACROSS

1/6ac./22ac./27 A comment on Noel's occasional spunky outbursts: "just an excuse for self-indulgence" (9,5,3,4,1,4)

9 Climax, having agreed "with butts adjoining" (3-2)

10 Really enjoying the attentions of a sexy club dancer? (7,2)

11/15 Tony and Gordon claim to be the highlights of a popular TV series (3,4,2,7)

12 Woman needs exercise alternative – variation on standard female/male connections? (7)

13 Absolute psychopath (name withheld) (5)

15 See 11

18 The place for a mighty stiff one? Sadly, Hercules' keeps soft (9)

20 Good to get close but not a gay sort of thing (5)

22 See 1ac.

24 Inept type's arse oozed endlessly, having runs (7)

26 Stick with Grade, though it's not the very best way to travel (4,5)

27 See 1ac.

28 Monica's views about Bill's tip (5)

29 Tennis club: it arranged with 28 to deliver balls (9)

DOWN

1 Hazel's tits appearing first in old stories (9)

2 Dear me! Pisspoor Tony's head may be served on a plate (unlike turkey) (3,4)

3 Vice, say, is getting up char (5)

4 An early protuberance: to exploit sound horny and hard (4,5)

5 Brown's 'holier than thou' in the main (5)

6 Hold on: grasping publicity merchant has interest coming (9)

7 Margaret and Tony familiarly have between them one enormous amount of destructive power (7)

8 Cop Brenda after booze (5)

14 Some sweater tops necessitate having to snog in turns (4-5)

16 Uses Cocaine – safe when mixed with beers (4-5)

17 They prevent hot heads from jiggling Brenda's bosom, right? (9)

19 The dog's bollocks: mine on top (3,4)

21 Source of crude smear – I am surprised (3-4)

22 County set started after lusty male (5)

23 Woman going to court to put Bill through ... (5)

25... Monica's last appearance in a tragic role for the city (5)

Crossword 197 winner: JOHN HOLDEN

Solution to Crossword 197

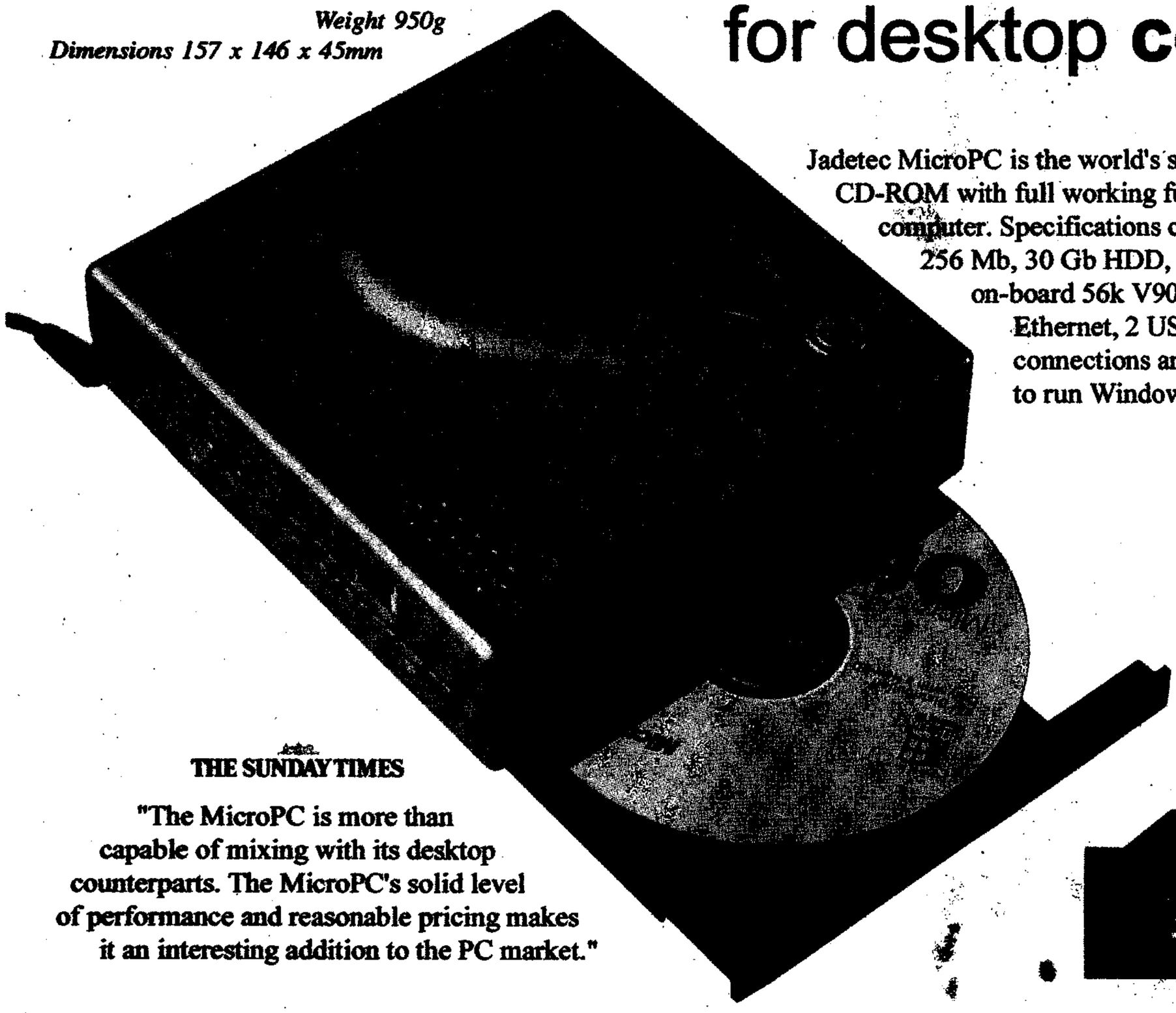
ACROSS: 1 Boob job 5 Goolies 9 Sally 10 Unnoticed 11 Bid fair 12 Slashes 13 Blocking motion 17/24 One-eyed trouser snake 21 Rub-down 23 Balls-up 25 Dismissal 26 SEATO 27 Tuscany 28 Suspect.

DOWN: 1 Bush baby 2 Ogled 3 Jaywalk 4 Blue-rinse 5 Gents 6 Outcast 7 In cahoots 8 Sadist 14 Omnibuses 15 Mothballs 16 Craps out 18 Erotica 19 Oblasts 20 Credit 22 Nasty.

extremely portable solutions

Ultra-small **footprint** for desktop **computing**

Weight 950g
Dimensions 157 x 146 x 45mm

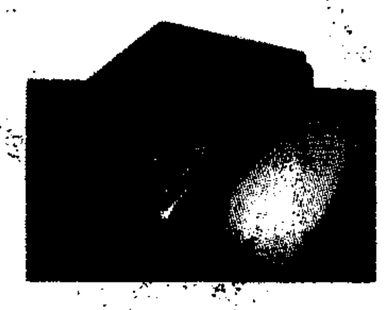


Jadetec MicroPC is the world's smallest PC, it's the size of a CD-ROM with full working functionality of a desktop computer. Specifications cater for Intel Pentium III CPU, 256 Mb, 30 Gb HDD, CD/DVD/CDRW. It features on-board 56k V90 Fax/Modem & 10/100 Base-T Ethernet, 2 USB Ports, Serial & Parallel connections and it's IrDA compliant. It's ready to run Windows 95/98/ME/2000/XP or Linux.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

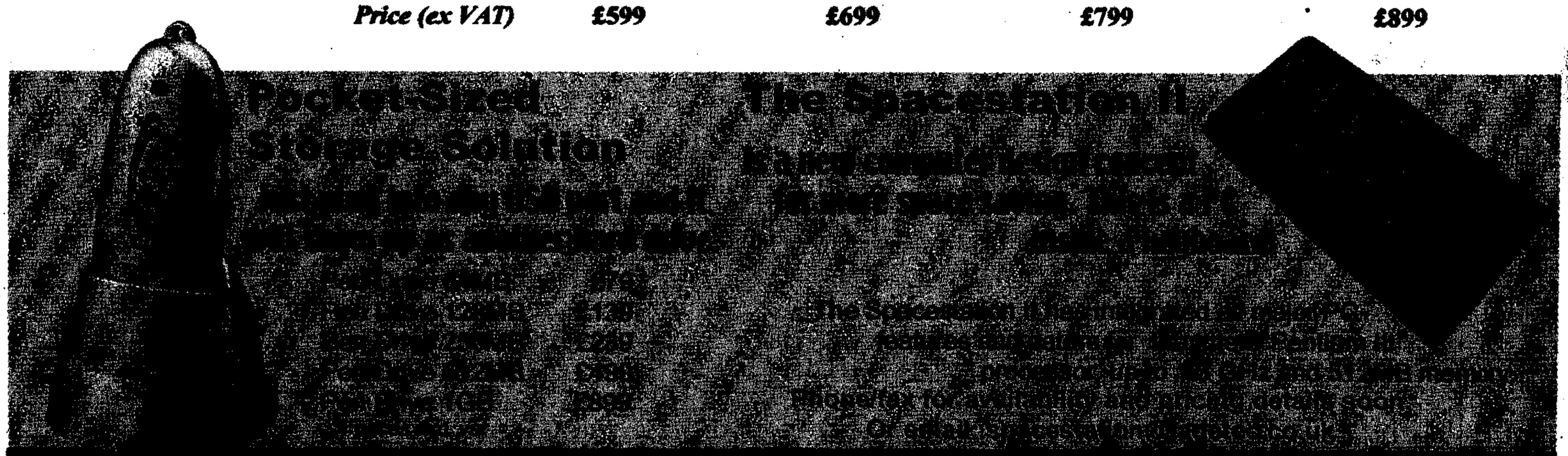
"The MicroPC is more than capable of mixing with its desktop counterparts. The MicroPC's solid level of performance and reasonable pricing makes it an interesting addition to the PC market."

pentium III



Available From
Office World
Selected Stores

	Intel Celeron 800	*Intel Celeron 1GH*	*Intel Pentium III 1Ghz*	*Intel Pentium III 1Ghz*
Specification	64 MB DIMM 20GB HDD Win 98/ME CD-ROM	128MB DIMM 20GB HDD Win 98/ME/XP CD-ROM	128MB DIMM 20GB HDD Win 98/ME/XP CD-ROM	256MB DIMM 30GB HDD Win 2000/XP CD-ROM
Price (ex VAT)	**£599**	**£699**	**£799**	**£899**



sales 0113 281 7788
fax 0870 138 4213
sales@jadetec.co.uk

Jade tec

Prices exclude vat and carriage. Prices are subject to change without notice. E&OE

SUBSCRIBE

TO 2000AD OR WE SEND THE DOGS ROUND!

Celebrating its 25th birthday in 2002, 2000 AD's cutting-edge combination of cool characters, sharply satirical stories and explosive artwork has enabled it to remain Britain's best-selling cult science-fiction comic - and now it's never been easier or better value to subscribe!

For just £9.00 a month, you can have 2000 AD and its sister title - the 100-page Judge Dredd Megazine - delivered straight to your door. We'll even throw in an exclusive 2000 AD woollen 'beanie' hat!

And as an added incentive for subscribing to both titles before 31st January mention Private Eye and get a free copy of the 100-page 2000 AD end-of-year special issue: Prog 2002!

To subscribe, visit www.2000adonline.com, call the Subscriptions Helpline on 01621-877250 or email subscriptions@2000ADonline.com.

If you prefer to pay an annual fee send a cheque for £108 to 2000 AD subscriptions, 5 Oakfield Road, Maldon, Essex, CM9 4XD. Subscription to 2000 AD only £2.50 per month (£30 p.a.) and the Megazine £3.95 per month (£47.40 p.a.)

OM SAI RAM

BESPOKE
SUITS & SHIRTS

HONG KONG'S leading ladies & gentlemans custom tailor is now offering Saville Row style suits' from **£129.00** and shirts from **£19.00.**

For your appointment please call **MR RAJA DASWANI,** Chief Designer and Professional Fashion Adviser to measure you personally and show you thousands of world famous brand name fabrics and latest fashion magazines featuring Business, Leisure and Evening wear at the

Sheraton Park Tower,
101 Knightsbridge, London from 13th December – 16th December 2001
& from 21st January – 27th January 2002
Telephone: 020 7235 8050

Hours 10.00am to 8.00pm for an appointment.

Our Special Offer for Ladies
1.Wool Suit
1 Silk Blouse
1 Silk Dress
All from £188

Our Special offer for Gents
1 Super Fine Wool Suit
1 Blazer or Sports Jacket
1 Matching Pair of Slacks & 2 Silk ties
All from £188

RAJA FASHIONS
34-C Cameron Rd., Ground Floor, Kowloon, Hong Kong
Email: raja@raja-fashions.com URL: http://www.raja-fashions.com Tel: (852) 2366 7624 Fax: (852) 2369 2807

hang up
the gloves

there's now a better way
contracted mediation

a business solution for your business needs

An effective way of preserving your business relationships and managing and resolving potential disputes

Project Finance - Construction and Development - Term Contracts - Supply Chain Management - Agency & Distribution Agreements - Film & Media - Environmental Risk

t: 020 7870 1400 **e:** e@resolex.com

ResoLex

VALID TILL 31.12.2001

MILLESIMA

Votre négociant à Bordeaux

3 MILLION BOTTLES AGE SLOWLY IN OUR CELLAR

Due to the privileged relations with the owners of the most prestigious Chateaux, Millésima can offer you a vast, rich and varied range of fine wines, which are available now as well as En-Primeur wines.

A VIP SERVICE

Need any help, have a query on a certain vintage, a special delivery or need some tasting information on any of the wines, Christopher MYERS is here to answer your questions on one of our free-phone numbers 00800 BORDEAUX (00 800 267 33 289) or on 0800 917 0352.

RAPID AND CAREFUL DELIVERY SERVICE

Your order is processed immediately, which means that the wines arrive in the respected delivery time.

THE FINE WINE CATALOGUE

Millésima's cellar has many hidden treasures…wines which have made today's most prestigious wine regions famous. By flicking through the pages of our catalogue, you will gain access to them all.

Prices inc. VAT and excise duties.

Free delivery for orders over £ 500.

A SELECTION OF OUR CATALOGUE

1996	£ per 12 bottle case inc VAT D.P.
Margaux	
Rauzan-Ségla	£ 470
d'Issan	£ 280
Palmer	£ 770
Saint-Julien	
Gruaud Larose	£ 500
Ducru-Beaucaillou	£ 860
Gloria	£ 250
Pauillac	
Grand-Puy-Lacoste	£ 570
Clerc Milon	£ 390
La Fleur Peyrabon	£ 200
Saint-Estèphe	
Cos d'Estournel	£ 860
Calon-Ségur	£ 440
Le Boscq ❤	**£ 210**
Haut-Marbuzet	£ 320
Les Ormes de Pez	£ 270
Haut-Médoc	
Cantemerle	£ 270
Citran	£ 180
Pomerol	
La Conseillante	£ 600
de Sales	£ 210

1996	£ per 12 bottle case inc VAT D.P.
Saint-Emilion	
Clos Fourtet	£ 370
Franc-Mayne ❤	**£ 200**
Pavie-Macquin	£ 440
Graves Pessac-Léognan, red	
Haut-Bailly	£ 400
Latour-Martillac	£ 260

1998	
Margaux	
Giscours	£ 270
Cantenac-Brown	£ 270
Palmer	£ 660
Prieuré-Lichine	£ 310
Saint-Julien	
Léoville-Barton	£ 470
Gruaud Larose	£ 460
Ducru-Beaucaillou	£ 570
Talbot ❤	**£ 310**
Pauillac	
Pichon Baron	£ 460
Duhart-Milon-Rothschild	£ 270
Grand-Puy-Lacoste	£ 360
Lynch-Moussas	£ 210

1998	£ per 12 bottle case inc VAT D.P.
Clerc Milon	£ 320
La Fleur Peyrabon	£ 180
Saint-Estèphe	
Cos d'Estournel	£ 570
Montrose	£ 500
Haut-Médoc	
Cantemerle	£ 240
Sociando-Mallet	£ 310
Pomerol	
La Conseillante	£ 1 010
Mazeyres	£ 220
La Gravette de Certan	£ 270
Saint-Emilion	
Clos Fourtet	£ 450
La Dominique	£ 420
Larmande ❤	**£ 300**
Pavie-Macquin	£ 760
Cros-Figeac	£ 270
Grand Corbin-Despagne	£ 180
Sanctus	£ 410
Graves Pessac-Léognan, red	
Domaine de Chevalier	£ 360
Malartic-Lagravière	£ 250

The 1998 tasting case

This case contains **2** *bottles of each of the following Châteaux :*

Brane Cantenac, Léoville-Poyferré, Lynch-Bages, Calon-Ségur, La Gaffelière, Domaine de Chevalier (red)

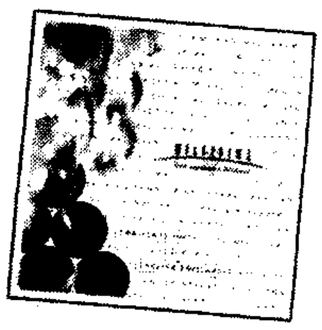
£ 420

12 bottle case

❤ = 10% *discount per* 3 *cases*

TO ORDER

By mail: 87 quai de paludate, B.P. 89, F 33038 Bordeaux Cedex



Free-Phone: 00800 BORDEAUX
(00 800 267 33 289) or 0800 917 0352

Fax: + 33(0) 557 808 819

E.mail: millesima@millesima.com

New web site : www.millesima.co.uk

GPRIV17 - GJCAT 01-16A

Return to: MILLÉSIMA Ltd
87, quai de Paludate - B.P. 89 - 33038 BORDEAUX Cedex - FRANCE

Surname: _____

Forename: _____

Address: _____

_____ County: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel/Fax/E-mail: _____

specialEYEs

gifts

The Ideal Christmas Gift
a Helicopter Sightseeing Tour of London Voucher

valid six months, non refundable, flight approx half hour

Please call for further details

CABAIR HELICOPTERS, ELSTREE AERODROME, BOREHAMWOOD, HERTS. WD6 3AW
Tel 020 8953 4411 email helicopters@cabair.com www.cabair.com

Who's in the BAg?

The original name guessing game that's perfect for Christmas, and all year round.

WIN! WIN! WIN!

We need **20** more personals. The best 20 will be used in future Eye-Seeks and the writers will win a copy of Who's in the Bag. The rest of you can jolly well buy your own!

You've read the personals ads in the Eye-Seek column, now get the game!

Mad monk WLTM vast quantities of young woman prepared to service Russian's greatest love machine.

Recently widowed regal woman, not often amused, seeks rugged outdoor Scottish type. No objection to body piercing.

Send your entries to: *Who's in the Bag, PO Box 3353, London N1 1SR*

Who's in the Bag is available from John Lewis, WH Smith and all good games and gift shops.

An animated cardboard model for you to make.
Order this and other models online or phone for our catalogue
01900 814333

www.flying-pig.co.uk

Register your protest to Grabby National

for being the Fantasy Bank by purchasing our alternative Grabby Chance/Community Cards for your game of Monopoly(c). All cards contain Grabby messages about the bank which is always voted the worst UK bank by the MSSG, every week!!! Ideal Unusual present for the boy with everything! Cost per set of cards £3.50 including postage & packing.

Phone your order now to
01375-483544 (8am-8pm)
View The Home Repossession Page;
http://www.home-repo.org/

surveillance

DO YOU *REALLY* KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?

SUSPECT SOMETHING'S GOING ON? FIND OUT - WITHOUT BEING FOUND OUT!

Disloyalty can be dangerous. It's often damaging and invariably hurtful. Commercially, it's usually expensive. You may not like the idea of using 'bugging' equipment but it can heighten your awareness and help you anticipate. You'll be amazed how we conceal microphones and tiny cameras in the most innocent and ordinary everyday objects.

LORRAINE ELECTRONICS SURVEILLANCE
716 Lea Bridge Road, London E10 6AW.
Fax: 020 8558 1338
Central London Showroom:
59 South Audley Street, W1K 2QN
Web Site: www.lorraine.co.uk
TEL: 020 8558 4226

BIRTHDAY NEWSPAPERS

Births, Birthdays, Weddings, Christenings, Anniversaries, Retirements. Papers from archives 1642-2001. Sundays from 1915. Quality presentations. Same day dispatch.

REMEMBER WHEN
445 Brighton Road,
Croydon, Surrey CR2 6EU
www.remember-when.co.uk

020 8763 6363
or call FREE 0500 520 000

OUR FREE, RARE & PRECIOUS GIFT CATALOGUE NOW AVAILABLE

speechwriting

SPEECHWRITING SERVICES

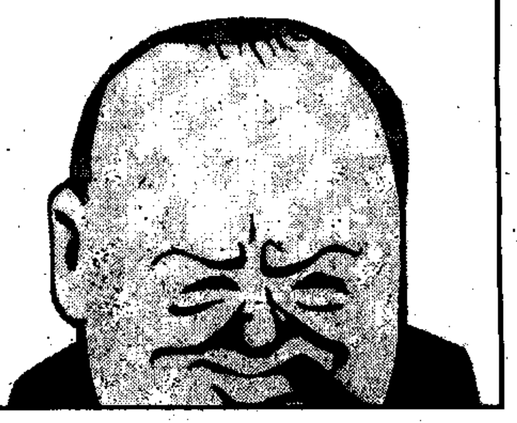
CORPORATE • SOCIAL • POLITICAL
Fully Customised and confidential

MAKE EM LAUGH OR NO FEE!

Emergency Speeches Undertaken

Britain's leading Professional
MITCH MURRAY
01624 622660
Visa - Mastercard

Brian Jenner's
Corporate Speechwriting Services
www.speakup.co.uk
tel: 020 7262 5884



travel

WORLD WALKS

Self guided/guided walking holidays throughout the year

Special guided Autu… Winter guided holidays in … Algarve, Madeira and Kenya

Visit our website on www.worldwalks.com or telephone for a free information pack on

01242 254353

WORLD WALKS, … CHELTENHAM GL… walking@star.co…

courses

Wine Courses

Enjoy learning about wine with specialist tutors in London, Manchester & Edinburgh.

For more information contact:

The Wine Education Service
020 8423 6338
www.wine-education-service.co.uk

jokelines

Listen To A Friend Being Sent Round The Bend!!
Dial: 09067 365 779

Choose A Joke
Mr. Fury • Irate Delivery Driver • Invite From No.10
The Detective • Tax Inspector • The Lawyer From Hell
Dial Your Friend's Number
(Catch Your Victims At Home - In The Office Or On Their Mobile - There Is No Escape)
When They Answer The Joke Starts

You Can Hear Them...But They Can't Hear You!

Calls cost £1.00 at all times - Phone Fun, 78 York Street, London W1H 1DP

Communications Team

Looking for somewhere to advertise?

Call: 020 7923 5416

Leaders in the manufacturing, design & sale of surveillance and counter surveillance products.
Eskan gives discreet professional advice on your individual situation.

ESKAN ELECTRONICS

Open Your Eyes
Who Can You Trust?
to make seeing,

Eskan Electronics Ltd 168 Caledonian Road London N1 0SQ
Tel: 020 7278 1768 Fax: 020 7837 9901 Email: info@eskan.com

Contact: www.eskan.com to view a range of audio transmitters – pens, calculators, adaptors, briefcases,... and covert customised video camera transmitters: mobile phone, tie, cap, & many more global intelligence technology, or call us for a free copy of our information pack.

books

"HENRY COBBOLD'S MINI-MASTERPIECE... achieves a double first. It is the first nudist novel (or novella) and the first in graphic form." - H&E -
"The comic book artistry is magnificent." - Naturally -

WEARING A SMILE
A ROMANTIC COMEDY ABOUT NUDITY

Order this full-colour, hardback, comic novel for only £12.50 (incl. P&P) from www.wearingasmile.com or by sending a cheque to "The 39", Knebworth Park, Knebworth, Herts SG3 6PY, England.

The perfect Christmas present for your neighbours!...
www.wearingasmile.com

"It's like the missing link between Asterix and Milo Manara... Why aren't there more books like this?" - Borderline -
"God knows what would have happened if Tintin had got mixed up in all this, but Hergé is evidently an influence... a charming, funny book." - The Erotic Review -

- only £12.50 including P&P -

THE ULTIMATE GIFT
for a cricket lover

Subscription to wisden.com, the world's premier cricketing website for just £25 (12 months for price of 10) including gift box

- Live coverage
- Multimedia features
- 138 years of archive
- Statistical analysis
- Incisive comment

For Christmas gifts call by 18 Dec quoting PE1:
0870 739 4500

the Idler
THE MAGAZINE FOR THOSE WHO LIVE TO LOAF

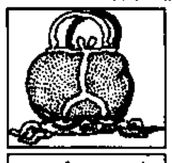
"The world's finest periodical"
Evening Standard
"I'd read it even if I didn't write for it"
Louis Theroux

Subscribe now and save up to 30%
Call (020 7691 0339 or visit www.idler.co.uk

cartoons

menu
biogs
books
gallery
exhibitions

Cartoon Gallery



A selection of cartoons, illustrations and animated cels can be found on the **Cartoon Gallery Website**, from **Chris Riddell** to **Steve Bell, Alex** to **Appleby, Honeysett** to **Husband** and **McLachlan** to **Matt.**

The site also has extensive biographies, including **Ronald Searle** and **Kipper Williams** and the **Search by Subject** pages contain **12** categories from **Art** to **Therapy,** showing over **120** original cartoons.

All cartoons and books are dispatched within three working days via our mail order department, so..... for the speculative and gift buyer alike, please visit:
www.cartoongallery.co.uk

The Cartoon Gallery 39 Great Russell St. London WC1B 3PH
tel: 020-7636-1011 fax: 020-7436-5053 e mail: cartoongallery@easynet.co.uk

clubs

The
Blue Angel Club

welcomes you and your friends for a really unforgettable evening. Drink, or dine and dance in luxurious surroundings and be served or entertained by our Angels.
Open Monday to Friday from 6.30pm until late
Membership not required.
17 Little Portland Street, London W1N 5DE Tel: 020 7636 2178

★ STOCKBROKERS • DOCTORS • ADVERTISING • ACCOUNTANTS • ARCHITECTS ★
MARKETING • DESIGNERS • EDUCATIONALISTS • WRITERS

drawing down *the* moon
PERSONAL INTRODUCTION CONSULTANTS - THE FIRST AND FINEST
"a partner for life...that's where Drawing Down the Moon comes in"
FINANCIAL TIMES
020-7937 6263
www.drawingdownthemoon.co.uk
Head Office: Adam & Eve Mews, Kensington. *City Office:* Cannon Street
24 hours. Member ABIA. Est. 1984

★ MEDIA COMPANY DIRECTORS • LAWYERS • PR • BANKERS • SCIENTISTS ★

services

Phone Bar
Swap messages and connect live 1-to-1 with other callers, 24 hours a day. Always at least 20 women on line, with up to 80 at busy times!
09066 144 149

Calls cost 60p/min. PhoneTime, POBox 4DZ, London, N1

CALLS COST 25p/ MIN. THE VIBE .PO BOX 206, HP3 9FT

meeting people

Culture Lovers
One-to-one introductions and group events for arts lovers!

Find friends and/or a partner who share your love of concerts, theatre, film, dance, galleries, opera, etc (London & home counties - all ages)

Standard annual membership is: from £120 for email members or £150 for postal members

Quote PE11 before Xmas for a £30 discount!

Call us now for an info pack on: 0800 096 9950 or 020 8289 8154 or read about us and join on:

www.culturelovers.com

recruitment

WANTED:
Opinionated, informed writers

If you hold strong opinions with an informed perspective, the we'd like to hear from you. *The Fleet Street Letter* is Britain's leading Contrarian newsletter with a 64-year history of challenging mainstream opinion and recommending overlooked investment opportunities for our readers.

We are seeking experienced writers with a thorough grasp and distinctive view of the financial and political arena worldwide. A bulging contacts book is a distinct advantage. In return we will offer a competitive rate of pay and the opportunity to work on a freelance basis.

Send CV, covering letter and any relevant supporting material to **Toby Bray, Publisher (ref: P.E.), Fleet Street Publications, Centre Point Tower, 103 New Oxford Street, London, WC1A 1QQ.**

fsp

PRIVATE EYE

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

020 7837 4566

£2.25 per word (£22.50 min charge)
Bordered style £10 Box Number £10
Listing on Private Eye Website
www.private-eye.co.uk: £10
All charges VAT inclusive
Reply to Box Numbers at address below

Deadline for next issue: 18th Dec

privateeye@communications-team.co.uk
Fax: 020 7923 5401
Feedback form: www.private-eye.co.uk

Communications Team, Exmouth House,
3-11 Pine Street, London EC1R 0JH

EYE CHRISTMAS NOVELTIES & GIFTS

STICK INSECTS FOR CHRISTMAS! www.bugsafari.co.uk

METAL TIE – TWIE – AS WORN BY PAUL MERTON on 'Have I got News for You'. – Ideal gift. 01792 460434 or E-mail: info@wtwist.com

CALVADOS APPLE BRANDY FOR CHRISTMAS – 3-100 years old. MOTHER'S ROUEN - 01787 220477 E-mail :mothersrouen@eurobell.co.uk

IMPRESSIVE CERTIFICATES MADE TO ORDER. s.a.e. to P.L. Quinn, 54 Murat Street, Waterloo, Liverpool, L22 8QW. E-mail: degreee3@pobox.com

YULETIDE SANITY PRESERVER! Lord Ernest Lambchop's writings, on-line at last. Essential webwit: http://jpc.focusindia.com.

SOVIET ERA WATCHES for military, divers, pilots. Catalogue from "RWI", 93 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, NG1 3FN – www.russianwatches.co.uk/eye

TRANSFORM A PHOTOGRAPH of friends, family, pets and lovers into Warhol styled pop art portraits creating stunning pictures unique to you. View on-line gallery at www.artake.com – Tel: 020 8458 0174 mobile 07712672000

MAPPED OUT – old large-scale maps from 1828. Originals and reproductions available. Call 01600 860521 or visit www.allmappedout.com

NAME-MEANING CERTIFICATES – or interesting facts/news from your friends birthdate. £11.95. All beautifully pine framed. 01582 766321. Order online: www.QiKweb.com/personally-yours

LAZY? £10 buys Life Membership of THE SLOTH SOCIETY. www.slothsociety.com

ARCHERS ANARCHISTS. The Archers are real – there is no cast! The independent Fan Club for Archers Listeners. Membership, T-shirts – Help fight castism. SAE: 15 Hewgate Court, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 1BS Or – archersanarchist@hotmail.com

"MERDE IL PLEUT" umbrellas £24.99 – OVERHEADS, 1 Wick Close, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 2NQ.

www.fartvideo.com – Genuine! Outrageous! Feats Of Blatant Bottom Barking!

PHOTOBANNERS FOR CHRISTMAS, Weddings, Parties, Exhibitions And Displays –6' BANNER with photograph – £39.95 without – £29.95 0121 241 7878 – www.ctgraphics.co.uk

FANCY A DATE? Unique, affordable gifts for family and friends for dates between the 20's and 70's with no newspapers! www.redletterdate.com

ADOPT AN OTTER at our sanctuary. For the perfect Christmas present. Go to www.otter.org – or phone 01471 822 487

BECOME A LORD OR LADY – SIR, BARON, COUNT etc for under £200. We can also arrange for your passport to be changed to include Lord or Lady etc. The Perfect Gift. Phone now for details. 08707 55 99 66.

HARRISON & SIMMONDS ONLINE GENTLEMAN'S EMPORIUM. Quality gifts for the home and office Since 1928 From Chess to Shooting Sticks to Globes www.h-s.co.uk – 01234 266711.

BEAUTIFUL LINGERIE AND MORE. Great gifts for all the women you know at www.emmajulia.co.uk. Free delivery and gift card.

GIFTS FOR THE REDHEAD IN YOUR LIFE – www.redandproud.com – Tel: 01844 274635.

TITLE PLUS land for £20. HONEST! Details: SURVIVAL,(P), The Cabin, STRATHY, Scotland KW14 7RY.

"WHAT A BRILLIANT SITE!" Shop for fun @ www.gizmoandwidget.com

NUCLEAR WASTE, Agent Orange, Cyanide and Semen - HEAT SENSITIVE mugs. At first : plain black mugs sitting innocently on shelf. Add hot water: wow, hazard warnings appear! £10 each. Totally safe. 020 8527 2513 www.poisonmugs.co.uk

CUSTOMISED QUIZZES for social or corporate functions. Unique gift. Details: 01737 243436 or candljam@hotmail.com

PLEASURE AND INVESTMENT. Autographs and memorabilia. Call Europe's largest dealer - Freephone 0800 731 0852 or www.fraserautographs.com

www.jokeshop.com for everything from the famous MAGIC JOKE SHOP in Cambridge. Viewers of the adult section must be over 18.

PROPERTUNITY – "THE GAME OF OPPORTUNITY IN PROPERTY". Visit www.propertunity.com

TITLES – LORD, LADY etc. Tel/Fax 0800 652 6641. www.elitetitles.co.uk

PERSONALISED CHAMPAGNE your unique message printed on the label delivered NEXTDAY nationwide £29 020 7737 8030. www.nextdaychampagne.co.uk

BIRTHDAY Newspapers FREEPHONE 0800 906609 www.historic-newspapers.co.uk

BANX CARTOONS – "The Many Deaths of Norman Spittal", "Big Fat Sleepy Cat", "Mr Bignose", "Cecil", etc – www.jbanx.com

FORGET CHRISTMAS – for ultimate festive commercialism, celebrate Kolafeast at www.patchedup.co.uk

ORGANIC ALES fresh from the Highlands – www.blackislebrewery.com – 01463 811871.

EYE HEAR

OTIS MACE, GUITAR ACE! Stunt songs to enliven your bash. www.Besonic.com/otismace. Tel: 020 7639 2218.

JUKEBOX HIRE FOR PARTIES. 7" vinyl and/or CDs. Delivered. From £119 – 020 8318 2852.

MOST POPULAR LOTTERY NUMBERS updated twice weekly. 0906 7535511. 75p min. 5 mins max. PO BOX 49 RH136WL

www.stevewalton.co.uk – free mp3 downloads

EYE READ

TOTAL LIBERTY MAGAZINE: for intelligent Anarchist comment and opinion send £1.50 cash for sample copy to Total Liberty, 88 Abbey Street, Derby, DE22 3SQ.

HAGGLING TECHNIQUES revealed. Everything covered, from Casbah to car boots! www.streetwisehaggling.co.uk

EROTIC STORIES MAGAZINE – IN THE BUFF. Erotic fiction, readers letters, fantasies, etc... Trial subscription £14.95. Annual subscription £34.95. ITB Publishing, PO Box 747, Canterbury, CT1 3GX. Hotline: 01227 762500 – www.inthebuffmag.com

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER – The Musical is now an outrageous book. Perfect for friends or foes. £6.99. Cheques Desert Hearts, PO Box 2131, London W1A 5SU, or check www.theatreguidelondon.co.uk

DO YOU PLAY THE LOTTERY? The most popular numbers updated and sent to you. 01403 275453.

FREE BOOKSEARCH – no purchase obligation. TWIGGERS BOOKS 020 8878 8644. E-mail: twiggers@btinternet.com

PUBLISH FOR PROFIT with www.NoSpine.com – 100s of titles available on-line.

OUT OF PRINT BOOKS FOUND – free search. No obligation to purchase – 01376 562334. E-mail: Jeremy.Dore@tesco.net

EYE WEAR

LADIES HATS. Over 400. 1930's - 1980's. £460. Fuller list 01923 823535.

EYE SAY

THE GOSPEL OF MARK has 666 verses. The resurrection of Jesus is written in John.

CAPITAINE, thinking of U2. My love XXX – SOUS-FIFRE.

CORRUPTION AND MISCONDUCT see the website at www.dorsetpolice.com and www.dorset.cc

WE APOLOGISE to anyone offended by the rude adult section of our MAGIC JOKE SHOP web site. Viewers must be over 18. www.jokeshop.com

CLASSLESS SOCIETY – It's just another con, the joke's on you. TLC

GO TO www.ralphtritt.com – it's no hoax.

www.nhs-exposed.com – We dare to publish what others dare to hide. The Truth Behind the White Coat." Not recommended by the Labour Party!

www.idlefishsatire.com – HO HO HO

EYE SELL

IRISH SPRING WATER. Hotel/catering trade. 28p ltr. 02890 838111. Anytime.

AIR FILTER MASKS. Cheque/Postal Order £7 – to R T Tyack, 24 Nuncells Close, Stroud, Glos GL5 1PU.

LIMITED COMPANIES Why pay more? Complete Scottish, English, Welsh and NI LTDs with own choice of name: £90. PLCs: £100. Guarantee, Charitable and Registered Office Facility also available. For free "Guide To Limited Companies": Freefone: 0800 526421. Write: Cosun Formations Limited, Freepost EH2925, Edinburgh. EH7 0LA. http://www.quickcompanies.co.uk/

JAMAICAN HERBAL HIGH SMOKING MIX – 100% legal. £5.00 per pack, postpaid. Erwin, PO Box 120, Newtownabbey, UK – www.alternativetobacco.50megs.com

www.seaford-music.co.uk – CLASSICAL CDS, SHEET MUSIC and Titterton Violins. Tel: 01323 732553.

100'S ADULT VIDEOS SALE! Classic 70's - 2001! bargains! 4catalogue E-mail: starzdvd@hotmail.com

NEED A NEW HI-FI? For anything from DVD to Minidisc, surround sound to CD – nip down to RICHER SOUNDS and pick up the lowest-priced gear in the UK... GUARANTEED! FOR A FREE BARGAIN-PACKED CATALOGUE, call 0845 1 300 200.

LOGS DELIVERED, LONDON. Quality seasoned hardwood 10x40lb sacks – £75. 020 8691 4984.

OLD PERSIAN RUGS – Mostly £100-£3,000. Shed not shop, telephone first. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. 01622 871353.

SILVIA SAINT DVDs/VHS!!! 4catalogue E-mail starzdvd@hotmail.com

JENNA JAMESON DVDs/VHS!!! 4catalogue E-mail: starzdvd@hotmail.com

REGISTER .co.uk domain names for £10 and .com names for £18 for more details visit http://www.a-q.co.uk or tel: 0800 389 5815

EYE MOVES

JAMES REMOVALS: storage/boxes, household/office, large/small. 020 8208 1497 – 0795 6309256.

EYE HOMES

WANT CHANGE OF LIFESTYLE? We are due to retire after 13 years of fun – Somerset country pub for sale. We want it to go to good new owners as village deserves it. Further details apply Box 1843.

EYE ESCAPE

HOGMANAY IN EDINBURGH – Mornigside flat sleeps 2-4. Details 0131 663 2906.

SECOND HOME? First Step... HOMES OVERSEAS MAGAZINE – now on sale from all good news-agents – www.homesoverseas.co.uk for information on homes overseas exhibition programme.

ORKNEY – small seaside cottage close shops on cliff path, high/low season. One-bedroom. Tel: 01294 467642.

LUXURY FLORIDA VILLA – 4 miles Disney, sleeps 6-8, private heated swimming pool. 07956 236284.

SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS – beautiful cottage near Strathpeffer, sleeps 5, great views, mod cons – 01449 676400.

LUXURY PRIVATE VILLA and apartment rentals all around the world. Rent direct from the owners. Visit www.villalynx.com

MARRAKECH – a selection of Riyads to rent in the Medina. Contact 020 7480 7998, 07903 918588, www.riyadedward.com or www.marrakechhome.cjb.net

NEED A COTSWOLD HOTEL FOR £20 A NIGHT? Don't bother us then! www.cotswoldsfinesthotels.com – 01452 425673

CRETE FOR LOVERS. Private village houses/hotels. Singles/Couples 0030 822 32030 – www.crete-direct.com

EYE FLY

FLIGHT OPTIONS – telephone booking service. Tel: 01432 851062, Fax: 01432 850722, HENRY ROGERS, ATOL 3793.

WORLDWIDE LOWEST PRICES – allegedly! Tel: 01942 603599 / 680268 – Fax: 01942 670868. Agents ATOL holders.

AWARD WINNING SERVICE, impartial advice, competitive prices: 01423 867226, Fax: 01423 869335. E-mail: info@rtknaresborough.fsnet.co.uk – Web-site: www.ryedaletravel.co.uk ABTA 28716.

EYE CARE

ANTHRAX – updated manual Oct 2001 covering letter handling, bio-terrorism, definitions and FAQs – plus more. Cheque/PO for £15.99 + £3.50pp to: DANOC PUBLICATIONS, PO Box 2342, Swindon, SN5 5WF.

UPRIMA – KAMAGRA – VIAGRA. Lowest cost erection perfection. 0701 071 8424. EuroMed Overnight – www.viagib.com

STOP SMOKING GUARANTEED. One session. Other problems sensitively addressed – 020 7357 9905.

'ERECTION CORRECTION' – VIR Clinics offer all effective treatments. 0800 163861 or www.vir-clinics.com

EYE TECH

Great websites for as little as £250 – fast efficient service – www.easy-uk.com call 07092 099100.

COMPUTER TROUBLE? LET A GENUINE PC EXPERT HELP YOU with advice, installation, setup, programming and trouble-shooting – and save yourself some big headaches. Call TOBY on 020 7229 3001 for friendly, professional advice.

REGISTER .co.uk domain names for £10 and .com names for £18 for more details visit http://www.a-q.co.uk or tel: 0800 389 5815.

ADVERTISE YOUR WEBSITE for FREE 4.5 Million ads p/m: www.TextSplash.com

PRINTER CARTRIDGES – Save £££'s HUGE SAVINGS on Inkjet Cartridges & Toner Cartridges for HP, Epson, Canon, Lexmark etc. Tel: 0800 917 4073 Fax: 0800 917 4074 – www.inkjet4.com

EYE HELP

RENT REVIEW DUE? Values of office premises are falling – do not pay too much. We are surveyors with extensive negotiating experience, especially in Central London, and will ensure you're not "ripped off". No saving – no fee. Graham Neal 01590 679375.

CONFIDENTIAL MAILING address. Personal or business. 9 central London locations – 24hr access. Mail forwarding, voicemail, free fax and E-mail receipt. Prices from £13/month. MAIL BOXES ETC – 0800 0838 069.

SPEECHWRITING – humour is my speciality. Speak to Keith Anderson. FREEPHONE 0800 389 8568 – www.crispandcheerful.co.uk

FREE FIND YOU SERVICE, FREE virtual receptionist service, FREE voicemail, FREE mobile numbers, FREE 0870/0871 business numbers, 0207 London numbers, memorable numbers, hide your real number/location. Call ComSciences 0871 71-79-126.

SORT IT! Obsessive-compulsive organises files, archives, libraries. Business or personal, computer or paper. Free quote. 07771 562863 – sorted@meister.com

BANKRUPTCY ASSOCIATION. Debt problems? Help available. 01524 64305 – www.theba.org.uk

CONFIDENTIAL MAILING address – interesting range low-profile privacy related services and products. 020 8556 2979 for brochure.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY CLAIMS. Lost out due to bad advice? Why don't you sue your adviser? Contact GORVIN, SMITH, FORT SOLICITORS and we'll do it for you. FREEPHONE 0800 214531 or E-mail : enquiries@gorvin.co.uk

ACCOMMODATION ADDRESS private, discreet, confidential mail/ message-holding service, Regent Street. Established 1979. 020 7580 4242. E-mail: enquiry@hold-everything.com – www.hold-everything.com

EYE DETECT

BUGGING DEVICE transmits to FM radio. £12.95 – Cheques/Visa: MICROTEC, 8 Chestnut Road, Guildford, GU1 1HG – 01483 570417. www.spys.co.uk

UK PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS. Worldwide service. Discreet and effective – 0800 980 2792 (24 hours)

LINK INVESTIGATIONS Private And Commercial Investigators Tracing, Surveillance, Staff Vetting, Undercover Agents, Matrimonial, Debugging, etc. Tel: 01306 880707 Fax: 01306 888077. E-mail: info@linkinvestigations.co.uk Web Site: www.linkinvestigations.co.uk

PRIVATE DETECTIVE (James Black). Tracing, debt recovery, fraud, international - www.crib2.com - 0121 247 2600

EYE LEARN

LEARN TO ANIMATE! Visit: www.londonanimationstudio.tv – or call; 020 7514 7373. For details.

CARTOONING – "GNOME" STUDY COURSE with EYE CARTOONISTS. For prospectus – 01785 250 700. E-mail: cartoonists@cartoon.co.uk

EYE FINANCE

FINANCIAL ADVISER? Small portfolio for sale – Euro 1m+ . Regular fees £500+ pcm and further 600,000 Euros for investment. 5 year revenue circa £60,000 +. All offers considered 07796 333615 in confidence.

NEED A PARTNER FOR BUSINESS with enormous earning potential – preferably someone with financial outlay Reply to box 0542.

WE INCORPORATE COMPANIES £98 + vat 01306 888542 – www.formacompany.co.uk/pe/

EYE WORK

AFTER 20 YEARS in advertising I have sold my ad agency and am looking for the next adventure. Well travelled, cultured, cosmopolitan. Youthful looks/attitude. Law grad, computer/internet literate. Financially capable, dynamic, resourceful. What do you need doing? Different is good. Money is secondary. Legal is mandatory. Box 0543.

SASSY, MARKETING/PR/PA girl seeks flexitime job, excellent CV and refs. Box 2048.

EYE EARN

MAKE MONEY FROM THE INTERNET. This system shows you how to make £500 weekly. www.effortlesscash.co.uk

YOUR OWN INTERNET BUSINESS. Fully automated and ready to fly! Earn while you sleep. Simply log on www.hellofreedom.co.uk

OVER 40 AND FED UP? Listen to 0845 2007266 then phone 0114 230 9858 if interested.

EYE WANT

CHEATING PARTNERS BEWARE! Serving Police officer/former P.I. writing a book on how to tell if your partner is unfaithful, requires accounts of how you/your partner kept affair secret, how affair was discovered, revenge taken and aftermath. All replies strictly confidential. No reply unless requested. Nothing published without permission. Info used = free copy of the book. Enquiries from publisher's & agents welcome. Stephen Brennan, Box 1443.

FORMULA ONE RACES 1994 to 1999 – wanted on video. 020 8677 5052.

WISDENS & CRICKET BOOKS WANTED. Best prices paid. MR BODYLINE: 020 7385 2176 – info@bodylinebooks.com

CASH PAID FOR OLD FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES (pre 1960s). Telephone: 07760 113540 or E-mail: davman@telinco.co.uk

BARRISTER/SOLICITOR TEAM wanted for January High Court trial. Brief is to establish Quantum of major contract unlawfully terminated. 0796 8051174.

EYE CONTACT

www.ivorytowers.net – The intelligent online friendship and matchmaking site for students and alumni from the UK's leading universities. For all eras. IT'S A NEW WAY OF DOING AN OLD THING.

MARGARET'S SPECIAL PEN CLUB – new friends uk/overseas. Sae: PO Box 1, Prestwick, Ayrshire KA9 1RJ. Est. 1986.

RESPECTABLE THAILAND LADIES wish to write to respectable Englishmen. No charges. Free brochure: send A4 s.a.e., PO Box 1101, Southampton, SO19 7WU.

LADIES FROM RUSSIA seeking marriage. Colour brochure available. Contact "PRIMA", 93 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, NG1 3FN. Telephone 01159 827741 or 07816405514 – www.prima-agency.co.uk/eye

CHAT ROOM 25p/min. 100+ girls online 24hrs. JCG, tn219dz, 09062 765 264.

'CONTACT GENUINE SINGLE WOMEN & Men online 24hrs. 60p/min, JCG, tn21 8xz – 09063 620246.

MAKE INTERESTING NEW FRIENDS UK/WORLDWIDE. Free details. DESTINY HEART (Dept PE) PO Box 10, Leeds, LS12 1YZ.

RUSSIAN LADIES seek relationship / marriage. Introductions in UK. Affordable trips to Moscow/St. Petersburg. Unlimited introductions. Excellent success rate. Phone IFM 01708 478697.

NATURAL FRIENDS – QUALITY ON & OFF-LINE INTRODUCTIONS. Free brochure 0800 281 933 – www.natural-friends.com

THAI CONNECTION – 600 marriages. Featured Thai TV BEST AGENCY, video/brochure – 01582 481725.

BEAUTIFUL RUSSIAN LADIES – Colour brochures, trips. No membership fee. Quick contact. Call Nick & Lilya 0113 2733442 (24hrs) – www.russian-rendezvous.co.uk

"CLUB RUSSIA – THE ROMANTIC RUSSIAN ADVENTURE". Simply the best opportunity for unattached men to meet the right women in the right numbers in the right environment. Long-term relationships only. 90% success rate on our holidays! Sceptical? We offer a moneyback guarantee. Details: 08702 201553. E-mail: info@clubrussia.com

ASIAN PARTNERS: Suman Marriage Bureau Established 1972. Member ABIA.– 020 8571 5145 or www.suman-online.com

PRIVATE ADULT PENFRIENDS – 3x27p stamps to EPPS, PO Box 36, Dartford, DA2 7ZU.

RESPECTABLE SINCERE marriage-minded Thai ladies seek like-minded gentlemen. Free brochure. T.P.I. 01562 748600 (24hrs). www.thai-professional.com

ATTACHED? SEEKING ROMANCE? Call David at LOVING LINKS 020 7602 8727. Info line 0906 550 1361– www.lovinglinks.co.uk – Discreet dating at the speed of E-mail.

THAI PARTNERS. New ethical agency introduces your ideal wife. Brochure, video 07810 562024 – kthcastell@aol.com

ADDITIONS – 'attached'? Discreet Loving Agency for married people. 020 8905 3304, 020 8958 9657. Established 1992.

GAY CHAT AND DATE – Phone: 09065 818004. Calls 60p per minute. Box 182, CT11 8GT

Findyourperfectpartner.com - you may just click! Our MutualMatch system is the world's most accurate. Currently bonus free membership period.

MAN TO MAN Gay Chat 0906 952 6006* Website: http://www.harmonypartners.co.uk/ *75p/min. PO Box 17, ASHFORD KENT, TN23 7YQ

THAI LADIES – Superb videos. Colour brochure SIAM INTRODUCTIONS (established 14 years) as seen on TV (22 times!) – 01689 860880. www.siam-intro.com

LONELY HEARTS: CHAT & DATE 0906 752 6299*, LIVE 1-2-1 CHAT 0906 734 3206**, TXTm8z 0906 963 1158**. Website: www.harmonypartners.co.uk Matchmaking (UK, Worldwide); Cheap Calls. *75p/min.**£1/min. PO Box 17 Ashford Kent, TN23 7YQ.

INTIMATE TELEPHONE DATING – 09099 100 143. www.phoneflirts.co.uk PO Box 182 CT11 8GT, calls 75p minute.

EYE JOIN

DID YOU MISS YOUR CHILD OR GRANDCHILD THIS CHRISTMAS? Join and support FAMILIES NEED FATHERS. Telephone 020 7613 5060 – www.fnf.org.uk

ACADEMIC DRESS INSTITUTE – www.centralinstitute.co.uk – or s.a.e. CIL, 58 Haydons Road, London SW19 1HL.

EYE SEEK

I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES! Unmarried Jewish mother seeking partner – must be impressive lover since only previous relationship was with Holy Ghost. Call: 'WHO'S IN THE BAG?' – 0800 389 4748.

EYE LOVE

"FROM EYE SAY TO EYE LOVE, THE CLASSIFIED SECTION OF PRIVATE EYE HAS BECOME A MODERN INSTITUTION." Radio Times.

NOT ALCOHOLIC civil servant male, 28 – seeks attractive lady of refinement, similar age. County Antrim. Box 0743.

WARM, ENERGETIC, ZESTFUL MALE, Prague property developer, 55 – interests: writing, travelling, the unknown, bronze parrots. Need kind, lively soulmate, 30-45? to share success and excitement. Box 1243.

WARM, CREATIVE AMER. WOMAN, 50s, seeks amusing, artic. acad. type male for urban talks/rustic walks. London area. Box 0343.

MALE, 35, VERY GOOD LOOKING. Loves shopping, cooking, cleaning, and has 20 pairs of shoes – requires highly erotic feminine female for other activities. 07949 453587

GENEROUS, HAPPY, LITERATE professional male, 30s, WLTM female, 20-35, slim, athletic and arty. E-mail: george6462001@yahoo.co.uk

TALL CUDDLY BLUE-EYED married man seeks straightforward lady for laughs and afternoon delight – cheeky_ize@hotmail.com

TALL UNATTACHED WITTY BLOKE, 37, seeks warm bubbly soul mate to share fun loving friends and family. Box 0143.

MAN WHO KNOWS WHO HE IS, seeks woman who knows what she wants. Prof attached late 40s intellectual and imaginative, strong and vital. Anglia/London. Box 0243.

Box No...
PRIVATE EYE
Communications Team
Exmouth House
3-11 Pine Street
LONDON EC1R 0JH

BEARDY MARITIME OFFICER-TYPE, forties, tall, overweight, balding, a bit eccentric, loud like James Robertson Justice, very married, presently living in central London, seeks bored married woman for mad affair with plenty of rumpty-tumpty. Never thought you had the nerve? You're just-right woman! Write Box 1643 or email: HMSpinnafore@hotmail.com – Bottoms-up!

INTELLIGENT, ATTRACTIVE MALE, 30, enjoys the arts, politics and fitness. However I also have a – up until now hidden – submissive aspect to my personality and would finally like to explore with an intelligent, sensual, assertive female in a relationship based upon friendship and trust as well as shared erotic interest. w77bvn.netscape.net – or Box 1143.

INTELLECTUAL, ATTRACTIVE, professional, tall, medium build woman writer (without family commitments) seeking cultured, wealthy and generous patron who is 6ft or taller. London or international. Interests: Arts, Business, Science and Philosophy esp. Tantra. 07748 357113 (voicemail only please – if you've unsuccessfully tried to contact me, please try again).

SINGLE MALE, 45, London based, WLTM attractive, glamorous lady, 30-65, who looks good / dresses well. Race, status immaterial. Tel: 020 8690 9490, 07956 283902.

MALE, MID-TWENTIES, seeks attractive, intelligent, unattached woman, 35-45, for discreet educational liaisons. teach_me@yourplace.co.uk

GODDESS, 46, with open marriage seeks prosperous London mortal for dining, culture and uncomplicated passion. Box 1943.

STYLISH ENGLISH LADY, sweet nature, late 40's, 5'6", slim figure, pretty brunette, seeks older distinguished generous boyfriend for discrete long-term relationship – ladylove@totalise.co.uk

I AM TALL, SLIM, FIT, 50 YEARS OLD, DIVORCED, SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN looking for a very special lady to spoil and enjoy the finer things in life in a long term relationship. Discretion assured if necessary. You are attractive, intelligent, sensual, romantic and passionate about the good things in life. You will have a sparkle in your eye, love travel and surprises. Have a free spirit and looking for someone to change your life. You will enjoy champagne on the beach at dawn or sunset and life will be filled with fun and pleasure. Seize the moment. Photo essential. Box 1142.

EYE SOLDIER

ARMY OFFICER, 27, charming, attractive, intelligent, adventurous and athletic, enjoys travel, dining out, cinema, skiing and sports cars seeks similar fun-loving female. Box 0443.

PINK EYE

SAPPHIC EYE? 30-something overworked, semi-fit, pseudo-literate medical lass with minimal emotional baggage seeks wonderful, wild and wicked woman to share time off. No bunny boilers. Cambs/London. Box 1343.

TALL, SLIGHTLY CONFUSED, straight-acting male, 28. Done the scene now looking for 1-2-1. Home Counties. Box 1942.

EYE BUYS

EYES 19 TO 56, 70, 73, 74, 85, 108 and 115 – with three records. 01453 860649.

HUNDREDS OF OLD ASSORTED EYES – issue 10 onwards. Offers invited. 020 8472 2829.

EYE NEED

HELL IN THAILAND. One gram ganja led to jail and £5,000 debt. Desperate! Please help. Barclays 20-95-61, 20796999.

BADGER IS INNOCENT OK! Funds urgently needed for independent bovine TB control trial. Badgers not included. Box 1043.

www.GoldenJubilee.info – Website helping the community celebrate The Queen's Golden Jubilee seeks sponsors. Take a look! 020-8547 0069.

FLASH DOLLY seeks flash million. Donations welcome - HSBC 40-04-37, 94900243.

YOUNG BUDDING LAW STUDENT desperately seeks ALL financial support – Lloyds TSB, 30-97-71, 00632153.

PLEASE HELP BEAUTIFUL LADY and 5yr old daughter escape violent X. Any amount appreciated. Thank you. Alliance and Leicester 72-58-26, Acc. 17013075.

EVERYONE WANTS TO KNOW YOU when you're famous, but I need help now. £1,000 will clear acting school debts. I won't forget you. Halifax 11-06-96, Acc. 00152183. Box 0943.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN medical charity needs free storage space London area, preferably south. Excellent record. Tel: 020 8653 3089.

DESPERATE! PLEASE HELP. Crippled by postgraduate debts. Need financial help to start life! Anything helps. Thank you. AbbeyNat 09-01-26, 15299126.

11-08-50, 00306708 HALIFAX. £2000 in debt. Any donation gratefully received. Please help. Thank you.

GRADUATE STUDENT IN DIRE STRAITS. £2000 needed – 30-90-50, 01478197. THANKYOU.

BANKRUPT BY SEASIDE OIL COMPANY and thieving partner. Need 25k to keep house and sanity. Now desperate. ABBEY NAT 09-01-26, 35461099 – Thankyou.

FUTURE JOURNALIST requesting financial help during training. Can you help? RBofScotland 16-00-53, 10041248

STRUGGLING TO STAY AFLOAT, 15K Debts, Please help. 83-26-28 00629423 or Box 1543.

VEGGIE, FAIRTRADE, ECOCAFE – £5000 startup needed. 07946 419150. 40-13-15, 41568965.

KIND BENEFACTOR would be so appreciated by hardworking brother/sister (13/11) if provided with opportunity to blossom with public schooling. Mum widowed. Really struggling. Box 1743.

STRUGGLING TEACHER needs a coputyer to organise my wok load. Donations greatly appreciated. Halifax, 11-03-45, 00119096.

YOUNG FARMERS (15/16 yrs) need help to set up band. Lots enthusiasm, no instruments, no cash. Any equipment, donations, extremely welcome. Age, condition not an issue. Can collect. Thanks. E-mail: charlie.bransden@farmersweekly.net

GENUINE FATHER IN MAJOR LEGAL DIVORCE BATTLE STILL DENIED ACCESS / RESIDENCY TO 4 CHILDREN AFTER ONE YEAR. Father in child / family / employment pleads for justice advice and money to fight system. 07950 233624 (24 hrs). E-mail: friendsuk@talk21.com

EYE HOMEHUNT

FILM STUDENT requires ludicrously affordable houseshare convenient for Marylebone/Chiltern railways, circa £65 p.w. – 07818 651627. dhunt20@hotmail.com

PRIVATE EYE'S

Christmas Book Selection

YOU'D BE CRACKERS TO MISS THEM

The heroes of *It's Grim Up North London* scoot across from the pages of Private Eye to their very own book. Let Jez and Quin guide you through coffee shop connoisseurship and North London etiquette. **PAPERBACK £4.99**

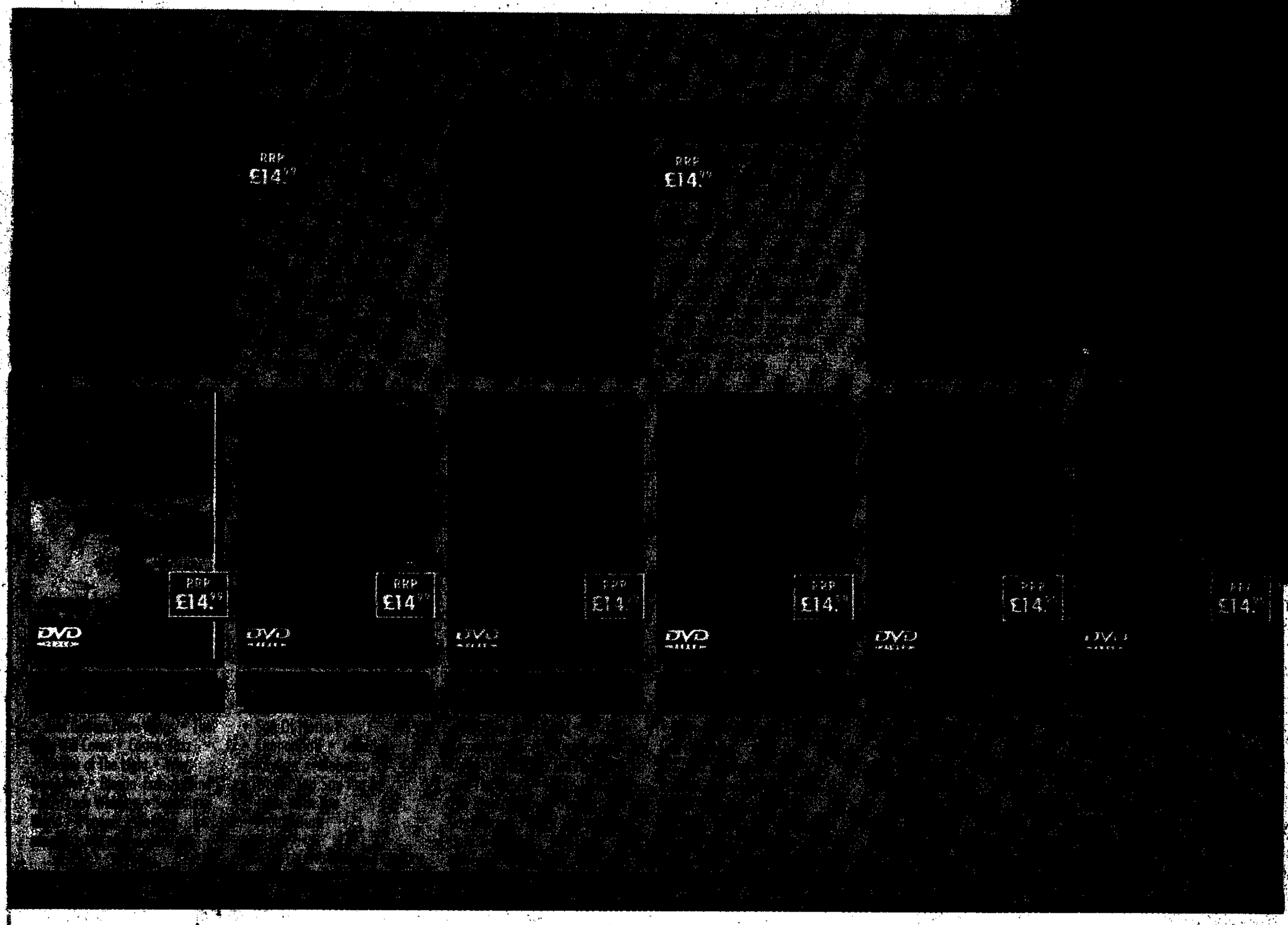
Meet the quiz show contestant – the new breed of ignoramus. Collated from the dismal depths of 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?', 'The Weakest Link', 'Midday Money' and many more.

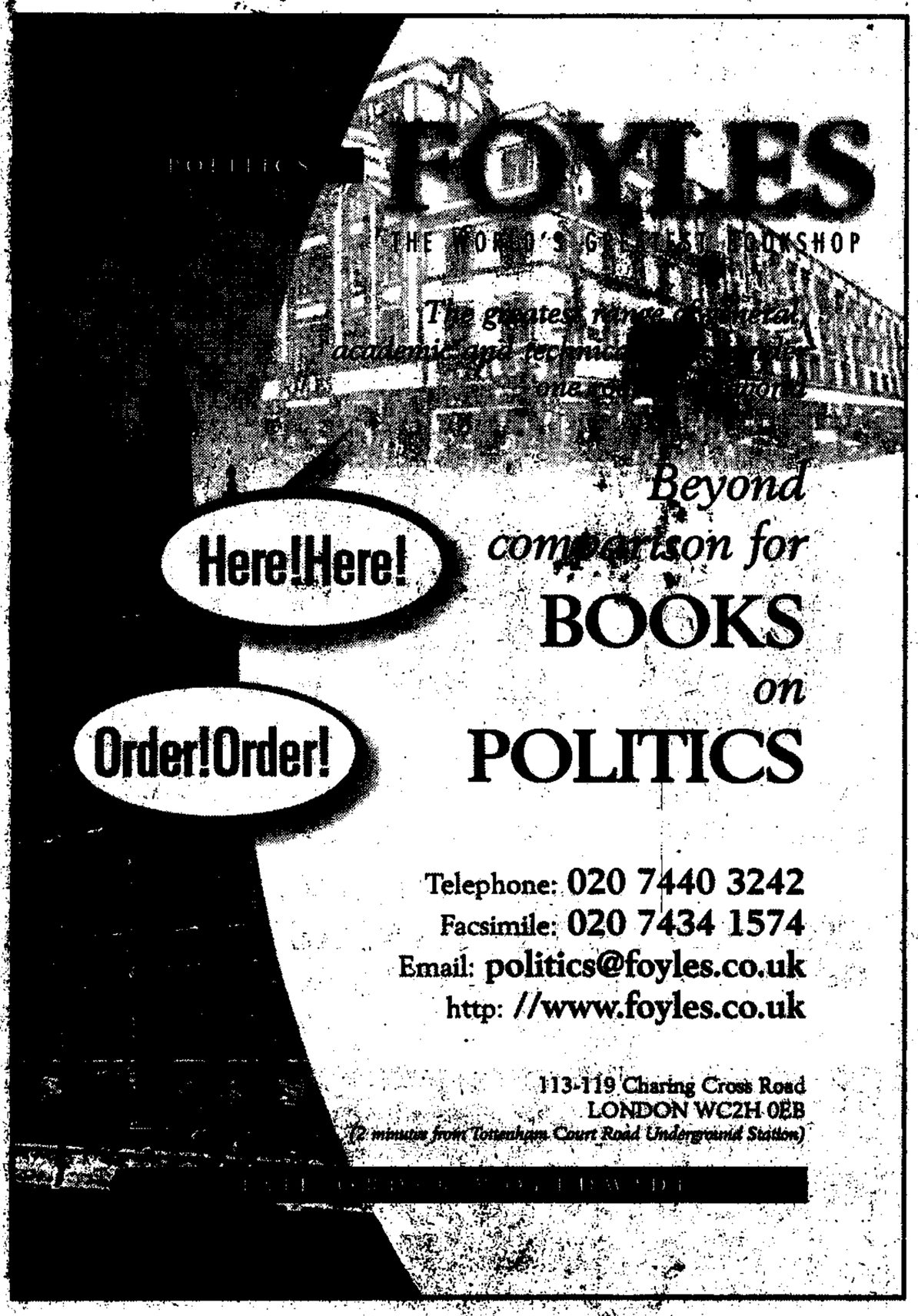
Dumb Britain is full of the obscure, ridiculous and down-right idiotic answers. **PAPERBACK £1.99**

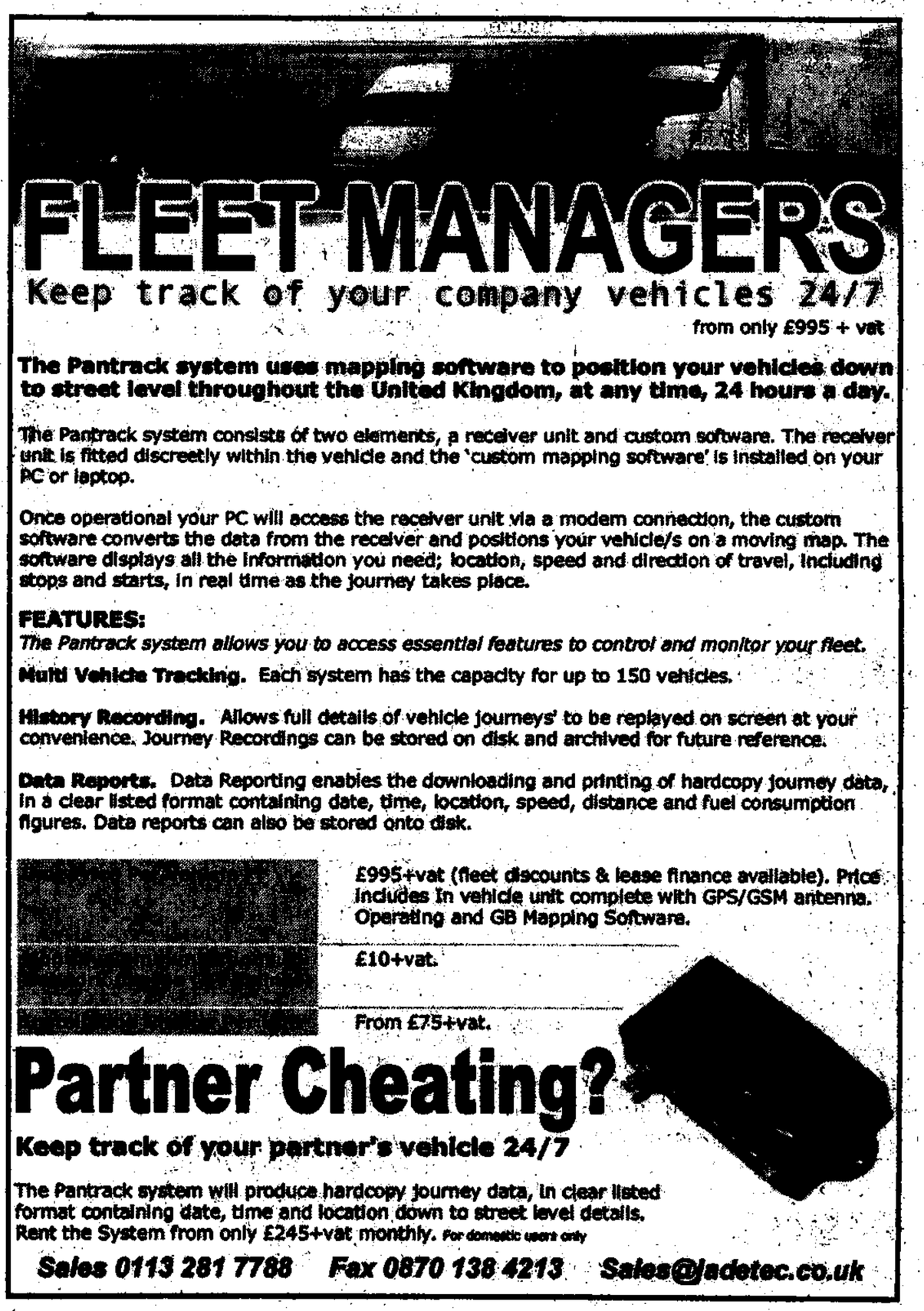
ALSO AVAILABLE
THE PRIVATE EYE ANNUAL 2001 £8.99
MORE VICAR ANYONE? – St Albion Parish News Book Four **£4.99**

On sale now at all good bookshops

To order direct (no postage or packing charge)
call 020 7223 8193
or visit www.private-eye.co.uk


RRP £14.99
RRP £14.99
RRP £14.99
RRP £14.99
RRP £14.99
RRP £14.99
DVD
DVD
DVD
DVD
DVD


FOYLES
THE WORLD'S GREATEST BOOKSHOP
Here!Here!
Order!Order!
Beyond comparison for
BOOKS
on
POLITICS
Telephone: 020 7440 3242
Facsimile: 020 7434 1574
Email: politics@foyles.co.uk
http: //www.foyles.co.uk
113-119 Charing Cross Road
LONDON WC2H 0EB
(2 minutes from Tottenham Court Road Underground Station)


FLEET MANAGERS
Keep track of your company vehicles 24/7
from only £995 + vat
The Pantrack system uses mapping software to position your vehicles down to street level throughout the United Kingdom, at any time, 24 hours a day.
The Pantrack system consists of two elements, a receiver unit and custom software. The receiver unit is fitted discreetly within the vehicle and the 'custom mapping software' is installed on your PC or laptop.
Once operational your PC will access the receiver unit via a modem connection, the custom software converts the data from the receiver and positions your vehicle/s on a moving map. The software displays all the information you need; location, speed and direction of travel, including stops and starts, in real time as the journey takes place.
FEATURES:
The Pantrack system allows you to access essential features to control and monitor your fleet.
Multi Vehicle Tracking. Each system has the capacity for up to 150 vehicles.
History Recording. Allows full details of vehicle journeys' to be replayed on screen at your convenience. Journey Recordings can be stored on disk and archived for future reference.
Data Reports. Data Reporting enables the downloading and printing of hardcopy journey data, in a clear listed format containing date, time, location, speed, distance and fuel consumption figures. Data reports can also be stored onto disk.
£995+vat (fleet discounts & lease finance available). Price includes in vehicle unit complete with GPS/GSM antenna. Operating and GB Mapping Software.
£10+vat.
From £75+vat.
Partner Cheating?
Keep track of your partner's vehicle 24/7
The Pantrack system will produce hardcopy journey data, in clear listed format containing date, time and location down to street level details.
Rent the System from only £245+vat monthly. For domestic users only
Sales 0113 281 7788 Fax 0870 138 4213 Sales@jadetec.co.uk

FOREIGN LANGUAGE? SPEAK IT BETTER.

d the let's-go-to-the-market
age learning, *Champs-Elysées*,
ta del Sol, and *Acquerello*
ination of timely journalism,
ion, and innovative pedagogy
te and advanced students of
an, Spanish, and Italian perfect
If you're looking to improve your
sk ls, these affordable audiomagazines
erfect solution. In fact, we guarantee they
ier ze your love of studying a language—
ur mo ey back!

What makes them unique? For starters, they're periodicals, so you can build your fluency month in and month out, for as long as you want. *Champs-Elysées* and *Schau ins Land* are published monthly (except July), *Puerta del Sol* and *Acquerello italiano*, every other month.

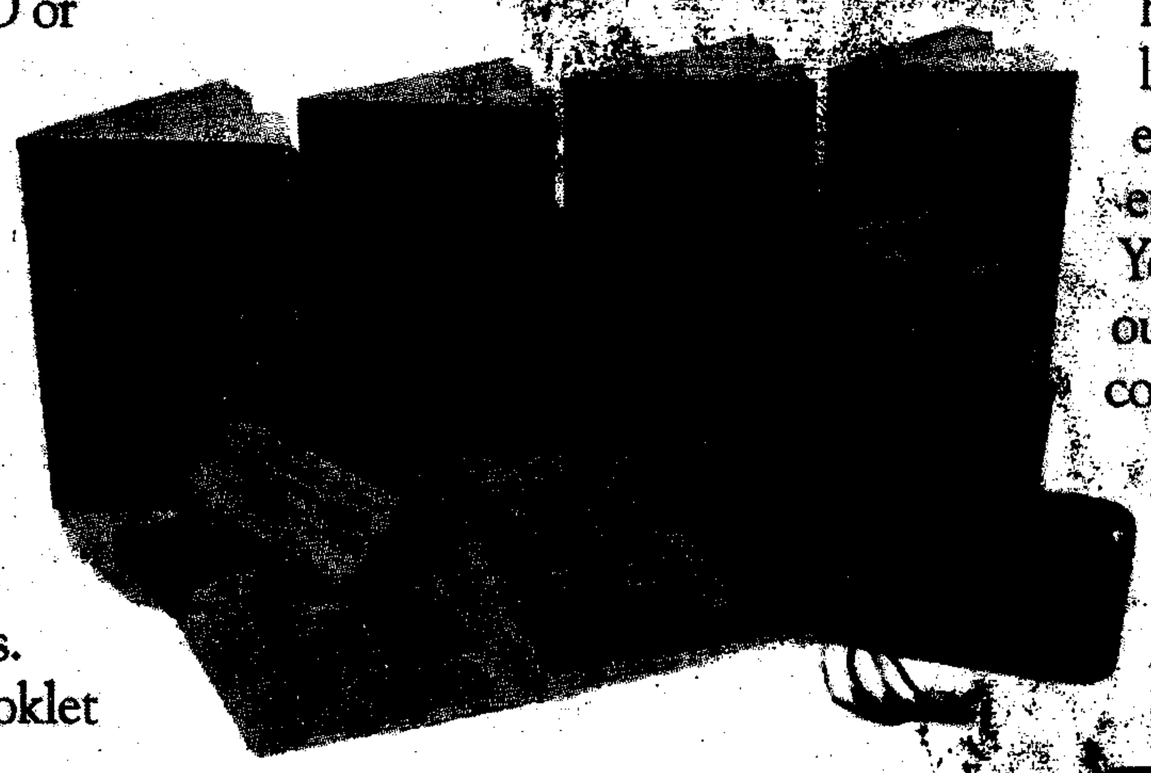
"...better than a language course." *–about.com*

Each new edition arrives as an hour-long programme on CD or cassette. You'll hear interviews with prominent Europeans, segments covering current events and issues, as well as features that give you insights into contemporary culture and beloved traditions. An accompanying booklet contains a full printed transcript, a glossary averaging 600 words and expressions translated into English, plus up to 100 background notes. If rapid improvement is a priority, you can order the study supplements as well. These worksheets contain listening exercises and grammar drills that are available for each issue. And whenever you have questions, you can get answers online at our Web site, www.champs-elysees.com

"In a word – excellent. Very polished and professional... a very good buy... highly recommended."
–The Journal of the Assn. of Language Learning (U.K.)

Because the audiomagazines are portable, there's never any sophisticated hardware or software to contend with. Work on language fluency while commuting, walking the dog, cooking dinner, anytime and anywhere you want!

Best of all, each audiomagazine is put together by broadcast professionals and editors who have a passion for European languages and culture. That enthusiasm comes through in every edition. From New York to London to Singapore, our subscribers tell us no company produces a better product for language learners. Why not find out for yourself? Just clip the coupon below, ring us, or order online.



YES, *Please rush me my first audiomagazine!*

Champs-Elysées:	☐ 5 monthly editions (£55)	☐ On CD, add £17.50	☐ Supplement, add £15
	☐ 11 monthly editions (£99)	☐ On CD, add £38.50	☐ Supplement, add £33
Schau ins Land:	☐ 5 monthly editions (£55)	☐ On CD, add £17.50	☐ Supplement, add £15
	☐ 11 monthly editions (£99)	☐ On CD, add £38.50	☐ Supplement, add £33
Acquerello italiano:	☐ 6 bimonthly editions (£69)	☐ On CD, add £21	☐ Supplement, add £18
Puerta del Sol:	☐ 6 bimonthly editions (£69)	☐ On CD, add £21	☐ Supplement, add £18

Price is inclusive of P&P.

Name _____

Address _____

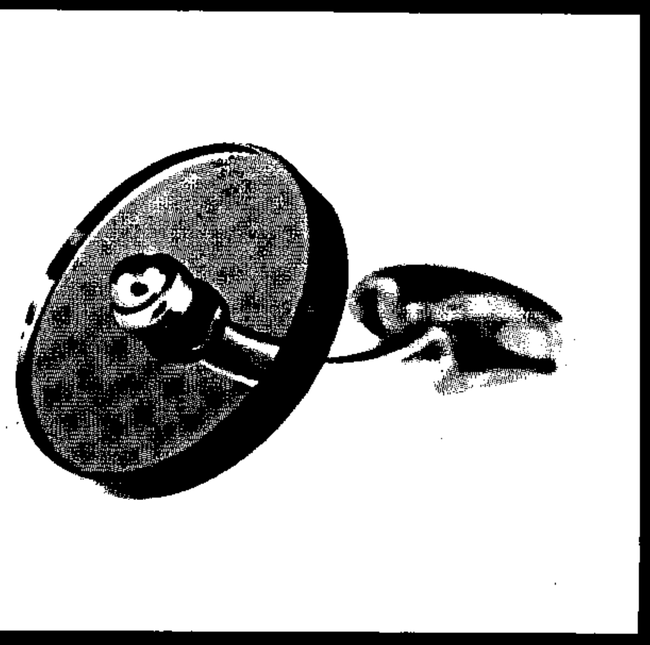
Individual Learning Account Welcome

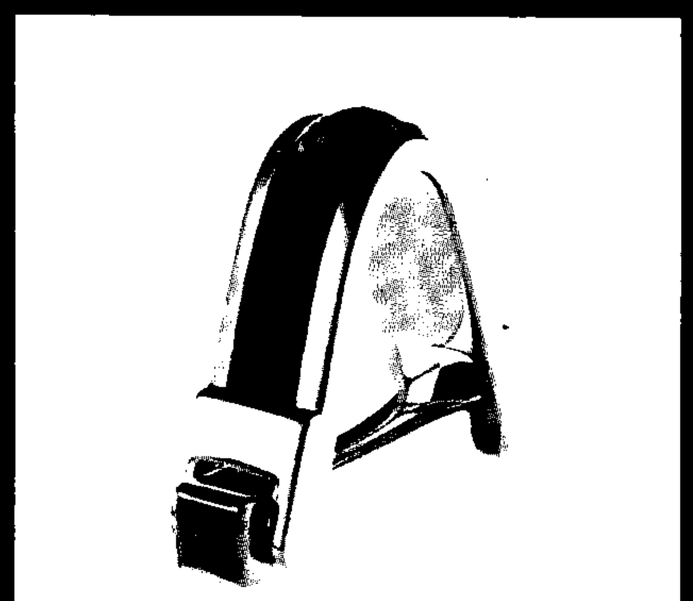
☐ Cheque enclosed. Debit my ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Eurocard ☐ Switch ☐ Diners

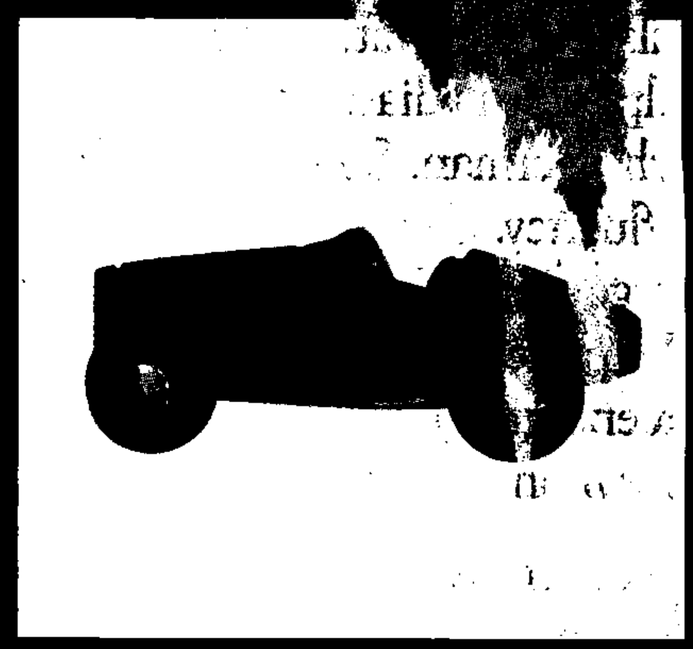
Card no _____ Expiry _____ Signed _____

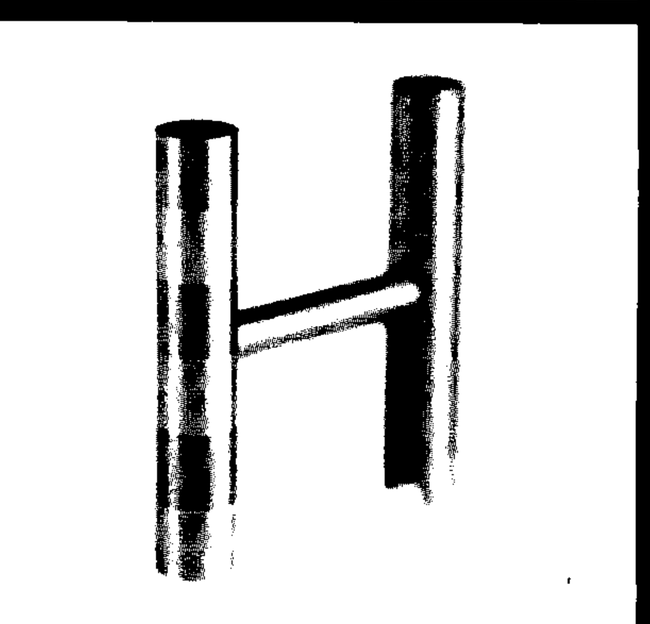
For faster service, order with your credit card via telephone: 0800 833 257 or FAX to 0117 929 2426
Outside the UK call (44) 117 929 2320 • To order online, go to *http://ads.champs-elysees.com/* PEX5

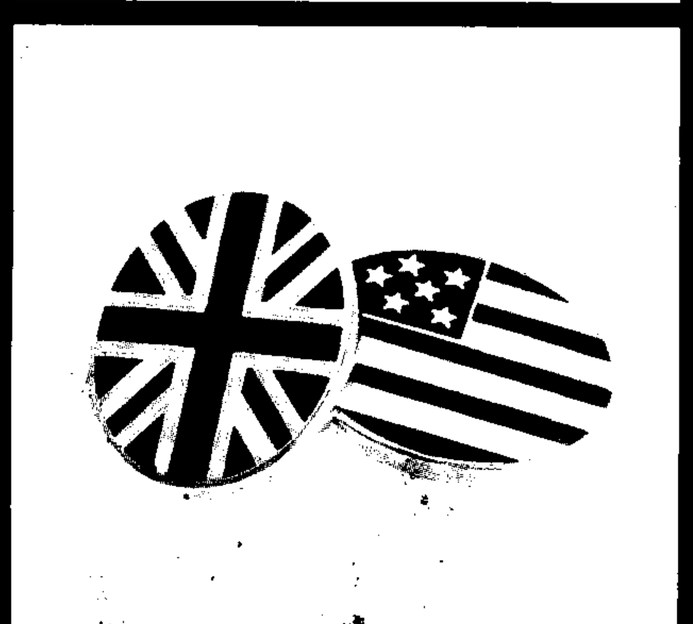
POST TO: CHAMPS-ELYSEES, DEPT.PEX5, FREEPOST LON 295, BRISTOL, BS1 6FA

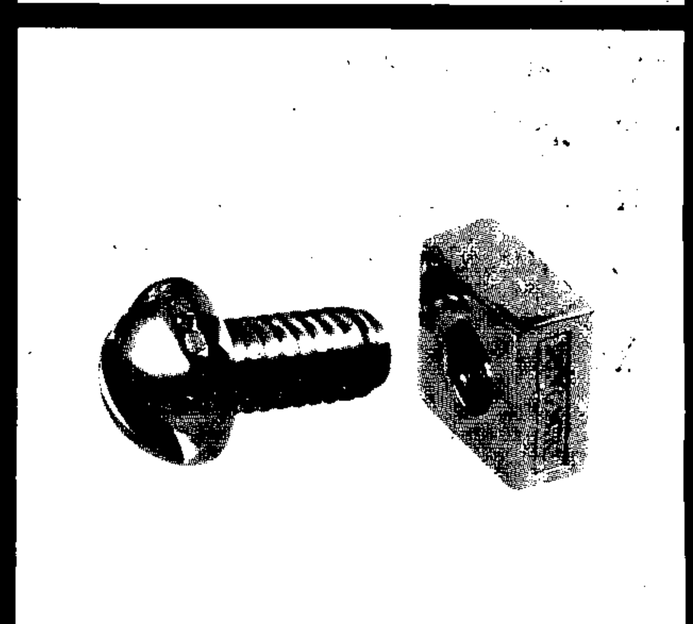


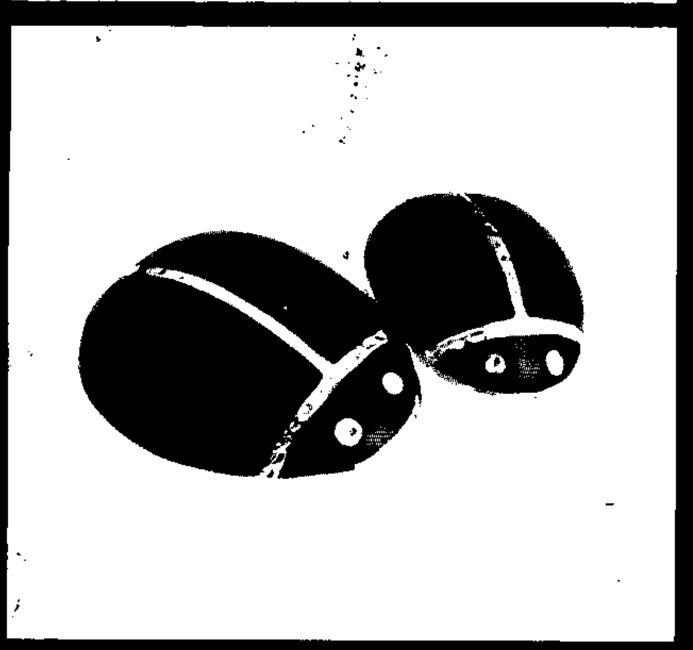


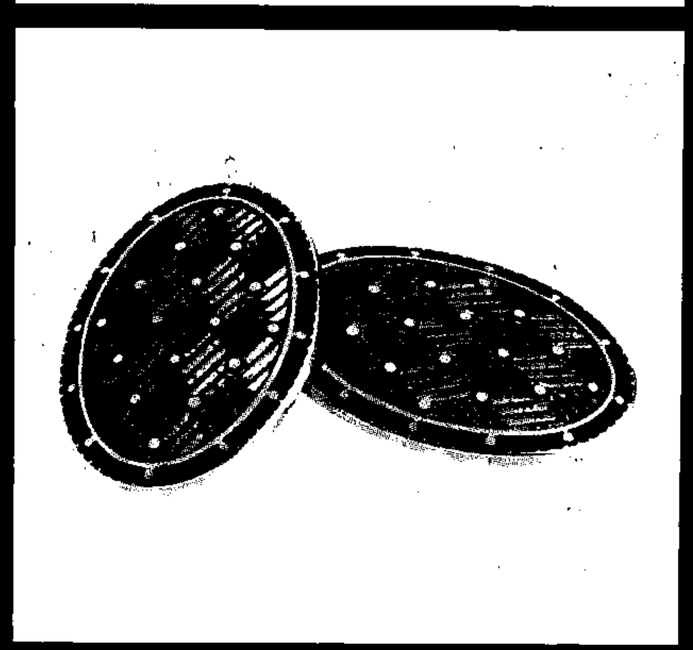












view & buy online

St James's Bury Street London

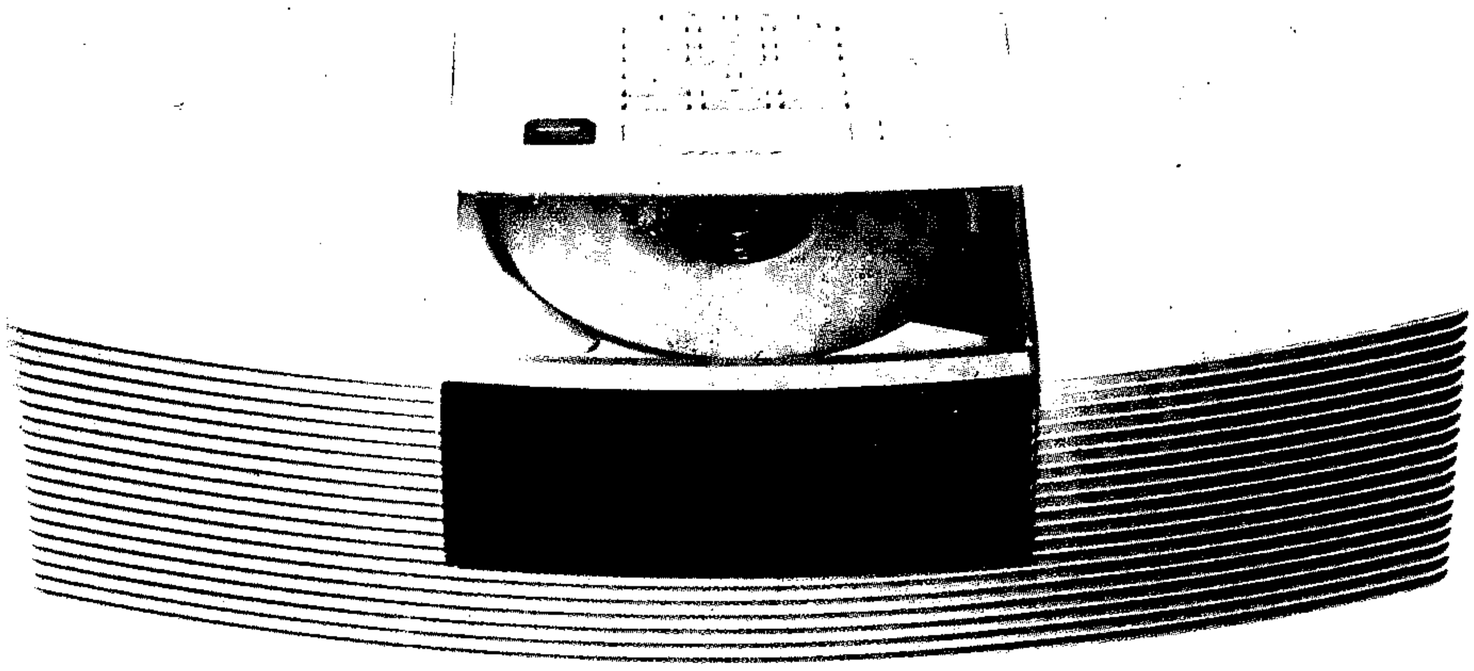
020 7930 8720

Knightsbridge beside Harrods Hans Road

LONGMIRE

www.cufflink.co.uk

THE GUARANTEE IS AS CLEAR AND UNDISTORTED AS THE SOUND.



THE BOSE® WAVE® RADIO/CD. We can describe to you how clear and natural the sound is. We can explain how the small size, convenience and simplicity add to the delight. But can you really appreciate it without experiencing it?

That's why we created our in-home trial and risk-free satisfaction guarantee. It's the best way we can think of to give you the truest experience possible – hearing the rich, lifelike, room-filling sound exactly where you'll use it.

When you do, we think you'll realize that no other system this size matches the performance. That's because no one but Bose has acoustic waveguide speaker technology. It's a patented breakthrough so revolutionary, it won the prestigious Inventor of the Year award – one of the many innovations that make us one of the most highly respected names in sound.

CALL TODAY AND DISCOVER A WHOLE NEW WAY OF LISTENING TO MUSIC.

WITH THE BOSE SATISFACTION GUARANTEE YOU RISK NOTHING. CALL FREEPHONE TO ORDER AND LISTEN IN YOUR OWN HOME. IF YOU CAN BEAR TO PART WITH IT, RETURN IT ANYTIME WITHIN 30 DAYS FOR A REFUND OF YOUR FULL PURCHASE PRICE. WE'LL EVEN ARRANGE TO HAVE IT PICKED UP. NO QUESTIONS. NO HASSLES.

Call 0800 022 044, ref. 7355

Or return this coupon to receive your free information pack.

MR/MRS/MS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

POSTCODE: _____

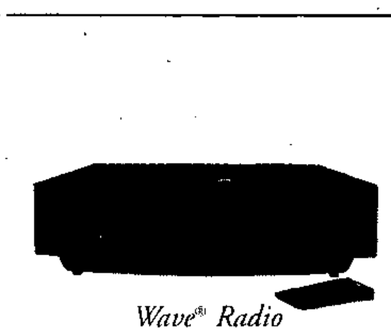
DAY TEL: _____ EVE TEL: _____

7355

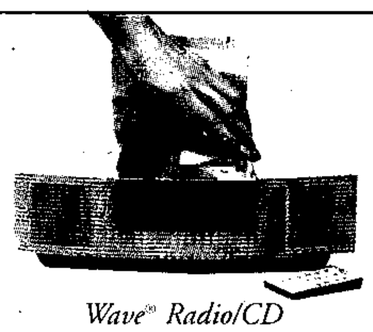
Wave® radio/CD and Wave® radio are available in Platinum White or Graphite Grey.

Send to: Bose Corporation, FREEPOST EX 151, EXETER, EX1 1ZY.
No stamp necessary.

If you do not wish to receive mailings from carefully selected companies, please advise us.



Wave® Radio



Wave® Radio/CD

Knight Ridder Newspapers writes, "We were amazed by the warmth and 'oomph' of the sound." We think you'll agree. In fact, we think you'll find yourself enjoying music more – and enjoying it more frequently – appreciating notes and subtleties you never knew existed.

NO OTHER SYSTEM THIS SIZE DELIVERS OUR SOUND QUALITY. That's why we can offer you our no-risk satisfaction guarantee. You call us. We deliver the Wave® radio/CD or the Wave® radio to your home. You listen. You decide. Then, if you can bear to part with it, return it anytime within 30 days for a full refund of your purchase price. We'll even arrange to have it collected at no cost to you. It's that simple.

For FREE delivery, order by 31 December 2001.

Call today to take advantage of our interest-free payment plan – and the clear and undistorted guarantee that lets you listen, and make up your own mind.

BOSE®
Better sound through research®

©2001 Bose Corporation. All rights reserved. Patent rights issued and/or pending in the U.S. and other countries. The Wave® radio design is also a registered trademark of Bose Corporation in the U.S. and other countries. Instalment payment plan and free delivery offer not to be combined with any other offer or applied to previous purchases. Instalment payment plan available on credit/debit card orders only and subject to change without notice. Delivery is subject to product availability. Quote reprinted with permission from Takiff, Knight Ridder Newspapers, 2 Apr. 99.

9 770032 888082 50>